

Robert Duffy is Cuomo's choice for lieutenant governor

By [Christine Carrie Fien](#), [Jeremy Moule](#), [Tim Louis Macaluso](#) on May 26, 2010

Rochester Mayor Bob Duffy is Andrew Cuomo's choice for lieutenant governor. The offer was made and accepted last night.

In a press conference this morning in Manhattan, Cuomo said that he wanted someone who shares his ideals and could immediately step in and govern if he should become incapacitated. And Cuomo said that Duffy's integrity is "beyond reproach." Cuomo said that Duffy was chosen for his performance as mayor.

The crowd at the press conference chanted Duffy's name.

"I am honored beyond words," Duffy said.

Duffy is in his second term as mayor. As recently as last week, Duffy said that he had not been contacted by Cuomo's people about the lieutenant governor position.

It has long been presumed that Duffy, a popular politician and former Rochester police chief, would one day run for higher office. His name has been talked about for everything from county executive to Congress member.

But the lieutenant governor run is somewhat surprising, given that Duffy is in the middle of a battle for control of Rochester's schools. Regarding mayoral control and the Midtown revitalization project, Duffy said this morning, "it is my hope that both will continue."

Duffy said that he would continue to fight for mayoral control "every last minute I'm in office." It's not clear, however, which office he's talking about: mayor or lieutenant governor.

Sean Hart, a spokesman for the Monroe County Democratic Party, says that if Duffy steps down to campaign, City Council would name a new mayor. And then there would be an election in the fall to fill out the remainder of Duffy's term.

If the Cuomo-Duffy ticket wins, Council would appoint a replacement within 30 days of Duffy vacating the position. That person would run in the fall of 2011 to fill out the rest of Duffy's term. If Council can't agree on a replacement, then the deputy mayor, Patricia Malgieri, assumes the mayor's responsibilities. And then an election would be held within 90 days to fill out the remainder of Duffy's term.

It sounds like Malgieri would take over the mayor's responsibilities, but not the title.

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Rochester Mayor Bob Duffy: future lieutenant governor? FILE PHOTO



Democratic gubernatorial candidate Andrew Cuomo. FILE PHOTO

From the city charter:

"The Council shall fill a vacancy in the office of Mayor arising otherwise than by expiration of term by appointing by a majority vote a person who is registered in the same political party as the person who vacated the office."

REACTION

JOE MORELLE

State Assembly member Joe Morelle (also head of the Monroe County Democratic Committee): "I think it's an inspired pick. Bob is the perfect choice."

On mayoral control: "Mayoral control is not about Bob. It is about the school district and the children of Rochester."

The process to get mayoral control for Rochester will continue, Morelle says. The bill is currently being reviewed by Governor David Paterson.

City Council member Carla Palumbo

"Bob Duffy is a great mayor and would be a great lieutenant governor." Having someone from upstate on the ticket can only benefit the area and the region. "He lives it and knows it."

If Duffy decided to step down during the campaign for lieutenant governor, City Council, Palumbo says, would choose his successor.

Duffy is not afraid to stick his neck out to do what he believes is right, Palumbo says. And that kind of leadership, she says, is necessary among the craziness in Albany.

Palumbo says she has "no idea" what the Duffy selection means for mayoral control.

City Council Vice President Elaine Spaul

Spaul says she was in the middle of a board meeting when she started getting a flurry of texts, announcing the Duffy pick.

"The timing is interesting," she says.

Spaul says that mayoral control is still in the hands of Albany, and that eventually, having Bob Duffy in a top leadership spot may actually help get the mayoral control bill through.

"Right now, I don't think it does anything," Spaul says.

City Council will have to get together to discuss the mayor's announcement and review the charter to determine the proper course of action in naming a replacement, Spaul says.

Rochester School Board member Willa Powell 9:35 a.m.:

"I think he'll be the next lieutenant governor, but there's no historical basis to think that lieutenant governors accomplish anything."

On mayoral control: "It's not just going to go away. Those who benefit from privatization and the charter schools crowd will keep the pressure on as long as there is a Race to the Top, there's going to be continued pressure to lift the cap on charter schools."

Race to the Top is the Obama administration's special funding for education reform. It's part of the stimulus package and awarded competitively.

Rochester School Board member Van White 10 a.m.

"I think it is wonderful that a guy from western and Upstate New York is being selected. And I think that Bob will be able to articulate the concerns that we have in Upstate New York. Very few people know the streets and the people of Rochester like Bob Duffy. Think of how hard we've tried to be noticed in Albany."

White has been an outspoken critic of mayoral control. and says that he worries that Duffy will continue his pursuit

of it as lieutenant governor.

Reaction around the state 10:15 a.m.

YNN's Liz Benjamin says that Duffy "can't be compared" to Governor David Paterson, the former LG. She quotes Joe Morelle thusly: "People won't be able to say he has no administrative experience. He has plenty of it. Both as a former police chief and as mayor of the second largest city in upstate."

Paterson, she writes, was a former senator with no executive experience.

The main thing the state political blogs are stressing is the geographic balance that Duffy brings to the ticket. There has also been mention of the ticket's lack of racial balance. In his morning press conference, Cuomo said his administration will be diverse.

New York Daily News' Daily Politics blog has a **roundup of reaction** to the Duffy pick from state Democratic officials, including a video of Senator Chuck Schumer.

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks: 11 a.m.

"It has been revealed today that Mayor Duffy will run for lieutenant governor. This is ultimately a personal and political decision for the mayor. I have been proud to work collaboratively with Mayor Duffy over the past four years to address the shared challenges that face Monroe County and the City of Rochester.

"I am confident that should the mayor be successful in his political endeavors, Monroe County's strong relationship with the City of Rochester will continue regardless of who leads City Hall. Like all residents across Upstate New York, taxpayers in the City of Rochester currently face many significant challenges. As the mayor begins to campaign across the state, I will dedicate my time to working with city officials here at home to best serve the interests of local taxpayers."

RBTL board chair Arnie Rothschild: 11:30 a.m.

The former Midtown Plaza is one of two sites under consideration to host a new RBTL theater. Rothschild says he has no idea what the Duffy LG pick means for his project.

RBTL sent a list of specific questions to Christa-Morgan, which is leading the city's theater site proposal, and Scott Congel, who's developing the former Medley Centre. Medley is the second site under consideration for the theater.

"We're hopeful that they'll be able to get answers," Rothschild says.

Sandy Parker, head of the Rochester Business Alliance, and a leading proponent of mayoral control: 1:50 p.m.

Too often, upstate and Rochester are ignored by Albany, so having Bob Duffy on the ticket is only a positive thing. Duffy knows the issues and will put a "Rochester face" at the governor's side.

Traditionally, lieutenant governor has been seen as a mostly ceremonial role, but Parker says Duffy would not settle for that. She'd be very surprised, she said, if Duffy hadn't talked with Cuomo before accepting the nomination about an enhanced role for lieutenant governor.

The Duffy nomination will have no impact on the Midtown project, Parker says. That's in the hands of the Empire State Development Corporation, she says.

The Business Alliance will continue to support and push for mayoral control, she says, because it's the right thing to do. Mayoral control, she says, is not designed specifically for Bob Duffy or whomever is in the job at the moment.

City Schools Superintendent Jean-Claude Brizard: 2:20 p.m.

"First of all, we wish Mayor Duffy the best in this endeavor. I am happy that Mr. Cuomo sees a need to tap into Western New York leadership as part of his ticket.

"This announcement, however, does not at all change the work that we are doing on a daily basis in the school district. Our work is based on effective practices that we have gleaned from the best schools and districts across the country-including those with mayoral control and those without-and this work will continue regardless of who governs the district, be it the Board of Education or the Mayor. Fundamentally, the most important work is what our teachers do in the classroom. No matter who is at the helm, our work remains focused on providing the best education possible to the students in the City of Rochester.

"Should [mayoral control] legislation move forward, our expectation is that it will be written to create a sustainable governance structure, regardless of who is in office at City Hall or who is Superintendent of Schools."

City Council President Lovely Warren 2:20 p.m.

"Given Mayor Duffy's love for the City of Rochester, this was surely not a decision he made lightly. However, we believe he can ultimately impact upstate New York in far greater ways as Lieutenant Governor. And with the strong City Council that is currently in place, as well as the great administrative team the Mayor has already assembled, there's no question we will be able to do what is best for our city. We will all work together to make sure that the City of Rochester is well taken care of, and that our community continues to move forward.