

Mayoral Succession: Big names on both sides

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How will the next mayor of Rochester be chosen? City Council has to decide and they heard from the public Monday night. Some big names in Rochester gave opinions on both sides.

"The answer is clear: we simply must have a special election," said Rochester Business Alliance President/CEO Sandy Parker. "Why? There are two central reasons: authority and accountability."

On the other side: former Rochester Mayor Bill Johnson supports an appointment by City Council followed by a general election in November.

"I support a general election option because that provides the best opportunity to allow citizens to choose their next mayor," said Johnson.

There are two choices:

1. City Council can appoint an interim mayor and then hold a general election in November.
2. City Council can call for a special election in the Spring to elect a mayor to fill the three years left on Bob Duffy's term.

In both scenarios there will be an election. The question is when and how the candidates are chosen.

If a special election is held, the party leaders will pick who is on the ballot. In a general election, it would be a wide-open race with a primary - giving voters control of who the candidates will be.

"At a time where people have an adamant distrust of government, are weary of backroom deals and are exhausted and want to give up we should avoid giving them more of the same," said Democratic Committee member Anthony Plonczynski.

He argues a special election wouldn't allow as much time for voters to learn about the candidates. Plonczynski also says a special election in the winter months would affect voter turnout.

Those in support of a special election include representatives from the University of Rochester, some City School Board members, business leaders and former lawmakers. They believe stability and continuity are key.

"We cannot waste time on this," said Fran Weisberg of Rochester. "A crisis in leadership is the last thing our city needs right now."

City Council President Lovely Warren and Democratic Party Chairman Joe Morelle both favor a special election.

City Council members are going to take what they heard at Monday night's forum, think about it over the Thanksgiving holiday and then come back and make a decision. Mayor

Duffy becomes Lt. Governor January 1st.

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