



CITY OF OAKLAND
newsrelease
Office of the City Attorney

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Oakland City Attorney John Russo Accepts City Manager Post in Alameda

City Council has 60 days to appoint a replacement once seat is vacant

OAKLAND, CA – After more than 16 years as an elected public servant in Oakland, City Attorney John Russo informed City Council President Larry Reid today that his last day in office will be June 12.

Russo accepted the job of City Manager in Alameda after a City Council vote in that city Tuesday night. Under the Oakland City Charter, the City Council will have 60 days to appoint a replacement once Russo's seat is vacant. That person will serve the remainder of the term ending in December 2012. If the Council does not make an appointment within 60 days, a special election must be held within 120 days to fill the seat.

Russo, 52, became Oakland's first elected City Attorney in 2000, and was elected to a third term in 2008. He was first elected to public office in 1994 to represent the Chinatown and Grand Lake neighborhoods on the Oakland City Council. He also served from 2002 to 2003 as the elected President of the League of California Cities.

"For nearly two decades, John has been a tireless public servant and an immeasurable asset to Oakland," City Auditor Courtney Ruby said today. "Alameda could not have selected a more thoughtful and innovative leader to guide their city through these turbulent economic times."

"John Russo served the City of Oakland well both as City Councilmember and as City Attorney," Oakland City Councilmember Ignacio De La Fuente said today. "Now the City of Alameda will benefit from his acquired experience representing the toughest city in the state."

Russo, a native of Brooklyn, NY, started his career in Oakland government as a pro bono attorney for neighborhood associations and as the volunteer President of Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation. As a City Councilmember, he authored Oakland's Sunshine Ordinance to make City Hall more transparent to the public and developed a balanced budget as chair of Council's Finance Committee.

As City Attorney, Russo wrote a landmark anti-predatory lending ordinance in 2001 and defended it in front of the California Supreme Court in 2004. He has been a strong supporter of gay rights and

Oakland's anti-discrimination laws, and is one of the only working law enforcement officials in the state to support Proposition 19 (legalization of marijuana). He has been an advocate for open, accountable government at both city and state levels. Over the last 15 months, Russo has worked with Oakland police to develop a progressive model for gang injunctions that guarantees due process and court review. Injunctions are civil lawsuits used to disrupt violent gangs.

In 2002, Russo started the Neighborhood Law Corps, a unit of newly-licensed lawyers who dedicate two years to the City at a first year teacher's salary. Neighborhood Law Corps attorneys work closely with the community and have prosecuted dozens of slumlords, nuisance liquor stores, drug houses, unscrupulous eviction agents and other public nuisances in Oakland neighborhoods. The program has won both local and national awards, including the Making Democracy Work Award from the League of Women Voters Oakland and the Award for Municipal Excellence from the National League of Cities.

"I endorsed John on the steps of the Alameda County Courthouse when he first ran, and I am honored to share his support and partnership as a community activist," said Frank Rose, Board President of the East Oakland Boxing Association. "The Neighborhood Law Corps has been an outstanding example of government paying attention to the needs of average citizens. They have fought hard for East Oakland and all the flatlands neighborhoods."

"John has been a smart, trustworthy leader who has been a great advocate for both businesses and regular working people in our town," said John Protopappas, President and CEO of Madison Park Financial Corporation. "Oakland has been very fortunate to have John serving in one capacity or another for 22 years."

A memorandum outlining the succession process is on the City Attorney's web site: www.oaklandcityattorney.org.
