

Holyoke City Council President Todd McGee says he can't serve as acting mayor

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Holyoke City Council President Todd McGee, standing, presides over a 2019 meeting. (The Republican file photo)

By [Dennis Hohenberger](#) | [Special to The Republican](#)

HOLYOKE — City Council President Todd McGee says he cannot serve as acting mayor after the departure of Alex B. Morse due to work commitments and potential conflicts of interest.

McGee had been the likely successor ever since Morse last month accepted a job as town manager in Provincetown. Morse said Monday he will leave office March 26.

“We now know it was a lot sooner than anticipated. There’s nothing wrong with that. It’s his (Morse’s) position,” McGee said Monday.

He spoke as the council’s Charter and Rules Committee was drafting a home rule petition to avoid a special election after Morse’s exit, instead having McGee serve as acting mayor until the next regular election. McGee asked to have his name removed from the petition.

An executive at MassMutual, McGee said there was “potential risk” of a conflict of interest “down the road” if he were to serve as acting mayor.

“It’s also my belief it shouldn’t be a part-time job. The mayor who steps in should be there every day working full time to the issues that we’re seeing,” he said.

“I want to be full disclosure, transparent upfront with everyone on this committee,” McGee said.

Boston and Lawrence recently were granted home rule petitions to eliminate the need for special mayoral elections, officials said.

City Councilor Joseph M. McGiverin was the last acting mayor, doing so after the departure of Mayor Martin Dunn in 1991. Dunn won Holyoke’s state Senate race, which triggered a special election.

McGiverin said Monday the consensus was to have the petition readied for the council’s regular session Tuesday night.

“We have golden opportunity to do this on how we want our government to look for the coming eight months after Mayor Morse resigns,” McGiverin said.

Councilor at Large Peter Tallman wondered what would happen if the Legislature did not approve the home rule petition before Morse’s exit. City Solicitor Crystal Barnes said such a scenario is “not laid out” in the city charter, which she found “unfortunate.”

[Story source: MassLive.com](#)