

NEWS

Paul McElroy resigns as JEA's CEO

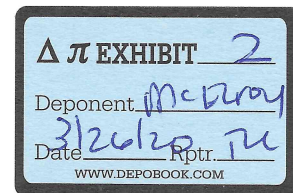
Utility board was offering new \$520K contract with 3% annual increases

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Published: April 6, 2018, 11:11 pm

Tags: **News, Jacksonville**



Paul McElroy announces his resignation at Friday's JEA board meeting.



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – At a Friday afternoon meeting in which the JEA board was expected to extend the employment of CEO Paul McElroy, he submitted his resignation, effective immediately.

McElroy has come under fire recently as discussions between the Jacksonville City Council and Mayor Lenny Curry's office about potentially selling the city-owned utility became

contentious.

"I believe the path forward for JEA, at least for the next period of time, calls for a different set of leadership skills -- not better or worse, just different," McElroy said. "So, over the past five months, I have given careful consideration (to) the contract extension and have concluded that it simply is not in the best interest of the parties -- me, both professionally and personally, my family and our community -- (to) extend this contract. I believe today is the appropriate time to begin a leadership transition process."

McElroy said he will consult for the JEA. Melissa Dykes, the utility's current chief financial officer, will serve as interim CEO until the board hires McElroy's replacement.

Reaction to McElroy's resignation was swift.

"We appreciate his years of service and dedication to the citizens of Jacksonville," Curry said in a statement. "As Mr. McElroy opts to step down, we have full confidence that the board will select an executive to move this asset forward."

City Councilman Matt Schellenberg, who was the council's liaison with the JEA, worked closely with McElroy.

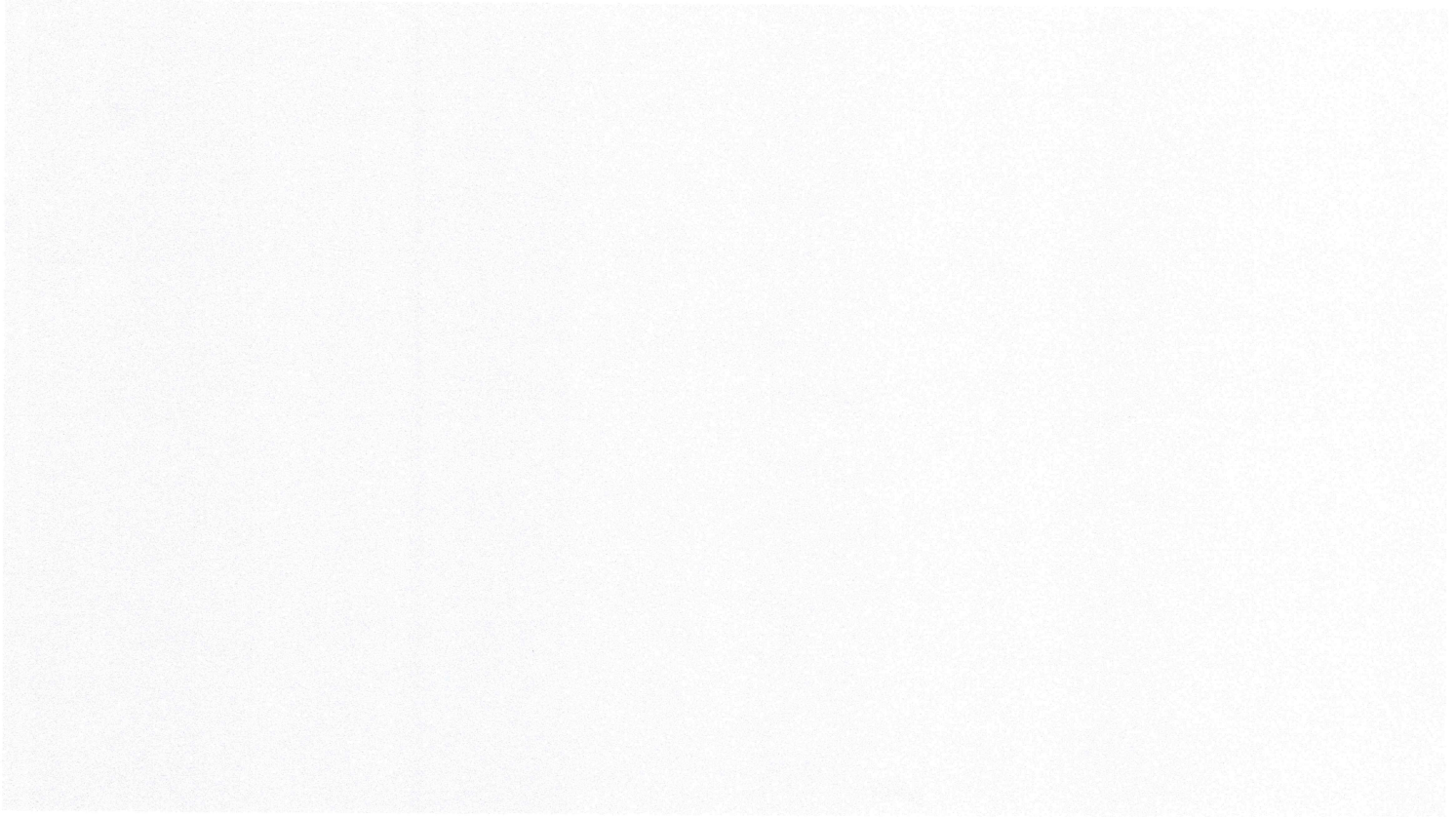
"I am kind of disappointed. I think Paul has done a great job," Schellenberg said. "Everyone in business has ups and downs, and the way we've been treated at City Hall has sort of been disrespectful."

JEA Chairman Alan Howard praised McElroy's service, saying he was an outstanding leader who had improved the utility's bottom line.

"Our successes are well-documented. Paul has been responsible, as well as senior team, as well as the entire JEA family," Howard said.

While McElroy's resignation was unexpected, Howard said he can understand it.

"If you've been witness to some of the interrogation he is been subjected to (in the) last several weeks, it may not come as a surprise to anyone," Howard said.



JEA CFO Melissa Dykes will likely be interim CEO of the utility.

City Councilman John Crescimbeni, who chairs the special committee looking into the potential sale of JEA, said he hopes McElroy's sudden departure is not related to that topic.

"I'm sure that's been a stressful job for the past few years with the changes in the electric and water sectors. And, of course, this JEA discussion has been added additional pressures to that," Crescimbeni said. "Let's give it a couple of days and see what other factors unfurl themselves. But I hope it's not connected."

McElroy had been chief executive of the utility for 5½ years and his existing employment agreement was to end in September. His current salary was \$473,000.

The new contract for McElroy would have boosted his base salary to \$520,000 and included 3 percent annual increases.

The new contract also included a clause about the potential for JEA to go private. If McElroy was let go in a sale, he would have collected double his salary as a severance fee.

DOCUMENTS: [Current CEO employment agreement](#) | [Proposed employment agreement contract](#)

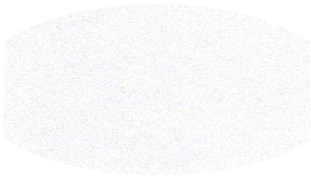
McElroy, who has lived in Jacksonville for 17 years, said he's been considering his future over the last five months.

The unions representing JEA employees released the following joint statement on McElroy's departure:

It is an interesting turn of events with Paul McElroy stepping down as JEA's CEO. This is a decision that was left up to Paul McElroy and the JEA board. The JEA Unions had no control over this decision. All of the JEA Unions look forward to a positive future for JEA and the City. The Unions stand on their joint statement #1 that the privatization of JEA would be harmful to the City of Jacksonville and to the JEA Customers."

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Kent Justice co-anchors News4jax 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. newscasts weeknights, reports on government and politics. He also hosts "This Week in Jacksonville," Channel 4's hot topics and politics public affairs show each Sunday morning at 9 a.m.

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