

## Chirkun Bringing Mayoral Chops To State House

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As the mayor of Roseville, Democrat John **CHIRKUN** has seen firsthand how decisions made in Lansing trickle down to impact local governments. Starting next year, he'll be a part of those decisions, but he has some different ideas in mind.

"I'd look at how they distribute the money and how it's been done in the past," Chirkun says of the way revenue is shared with locals. "I'd ask for it to be changed."

Having been the mayor of Roseville since 2009, Chirkun will likely join the House next term as the new representative for the 22nd District. And one of the major issues he wants to work on is funding for local governments and public safety agencies.



During his time as Roseville's leader, Chirkun said budget cutbacks have helped the city's workforce drop from about 275 employees to about 215 employees.

Within that is a drop in the police force, as well. It's gone from about 80 sworn officers to about 50 officers, said Chirkun, who worked for the Wayne County Sheriff Department for almost 30 years.

Many local governments are struggling, Chirkun said. Like others, he said Roseville has had to fight and claw for the money it's gotten.

Public safety agencies need help, and the state needs to reinstate revenue sharing dollars that have been dropped, he said.

His experience as mayor helped spur him to run for the House this year, along with frustration over road funding and taxes imposed on retirement income.

The 22nd District seat is open as Rep. Harold **HAUGH** (D-Roseville) is termed out of the chamber.

It so happens that Haugh and Chirkun have known each other for about 30 years. They both ran for the City Council in 1991. Haugh won a seat. Chirkun didn't that time.

He was elected to the council four years later in 1995.

For a time while Haugh was mayor, Chirkun was the mayor pro tem. And while Haugh has worked in the House, the two men have bounced ideas off each other, Chirkun said.

Chirkun became the mayor after Haugh left the position.

Haugh said he's been grooming Chirkun to be his replacement in the House, giving him advice on how to work across the aisle and giving him updates on what's been going on in Lansing.

The two talk about two or three times each week.

"I think he will be a great representative up there," Haugh said today. "And if he's not, he'll have to answer to me."

With Haugh's help, Chirkun dominated a two-way primary race for the Democratic nomination in the 22nd District this summer.

Now, in the general election, he's the heavy favorite. The district has a 63.7 percent Democratic voting base, according to the firm Target-Insyght.

Along with his experience as a local government leader, Chirkun brings lengthy experience in law enforcement to Lansing.

He worked for the Wayne County Sheriff's Department for about 29 years. He spent 22 years in the department's union and rose to rank of executive sergeant.

By the time he retired in 2004, he was the commanding officer of the sheriff's Internet Crimes Unit and Special Operations.

During his time with the department, Chirkun said he was also on both sides of the negotiating table for labor talks---experience he said will help him work in Lansing.

As for what he wants to work on in the House, Chirkun said he wants the state to improve roads. He said he's open to a 1-cent increase in the sales tax if voters want to approve that change.

Chirkun is also a foster parent and he said there are changes to that system that could improve it.

Social workers, for example he said, could be given more power.

Chirkun and his wife, Sharon, have been married for more than 29 years. They have two children, a foster child and two grandchildren.

As for his political leanings, Chirkun used his predecessor as a measuring stick.

He explained, "I probably lean a little bit more left than Harold does."