

City of Industry selects new interim city manager



The City of Industry named Paul Philips, deputy executive director of the California Contract Cities Assn., to be its new interim city manager Thursday.

(Luis Sinco / Los Angeles Times)

By **RICHARD WINTON***contact the reporter*

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The City of Industry appointed a new interim city manager Thursday to replace Kevin Radecki, who stepped down earlier this week after publicly expressing his concern that he might be fired by the newly elected council majority.

The City Council selected Paul Philips, 64, deputy executive director of the California Contract Cities Assn., to replace Radecki. Philips has previously served as city manager in Covina, Maywood and Artesia.

In the weeks before the June 2 council election, Radecki candidly expressed his fear that he would lose his job if three candidates backed by former Mayor David Perez were elected.

Radecki believed he would be fired for challenging the lucrative contracts that Perez and his family have with the sprawling industrial suburb in the San Gabriel Valley. The scale of the multimillion-dollar contracts was revealed by auditors commissioned by the city on Radecki's watch.

The three Perez-backed candidates now form a majority on the five-member City Council, and on Monday, Radecki stepped down. He will stay on for one year as a consultant to smooth the transition.

Two weeks ago, the new council led by Mayor Mark Radecki, the brother of the former city manager, fired the longtime city attorney who oversaw a lawsuit against the Perez family and its businesses. Auditors hired by the city found that the Perez family and its businesses reaped \$326 million over the last two decades from city contracts.

Seeking to recoup the money, Industry sued Perez, his companies and four family members in May, alleging the misappropriation of millions of dollars in public funds through false or inflated invoices and the performance of unauthorized work on city contracts, according to the complaint.

The suit echoes the auditors' findings, which were released earlier this year and made the political landscape tumultuous in the city of 400 residents and 2,500 businesses.

According to the auditors' findings, payments to the Perez companies averaged \$16 million a year over the last two decades. The contracts included \$4.9 million for lawn-mower rentals and street-cleaning fees billed at six times a competitor's rate, auditors found.

After the lucrative contracts came to light, the Los Angeles County district attorney's office launched a probe and the state controller began investigations into Industry's contracts with the Perez family.

The Perez-backed majority on the five-member council is expected to curtail the ongoing litigation, but no decisions have been made.

The newly elected majority voted this month to repeal part of a recently enacted ordinance that protected the city attorney and other city employees from losing their jobs during the 180-day period after a new council body is elected.

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