

Richmond mayor-elect plans to retain current chief administrator; will hire Va. first lady's chief of staff

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Richmond Mayor-elect Levar Stoney has turned to familiar faces to fill the first two positions in his administration.

Stoney announced Monday that he will keep the city's chief administrative officer, Selena Cuffee-Glenn, in her current position. She has worked for the city for just under two years and is well-regarded by the current administration and by the City Council.

His second hire is less well-known to the general public, but Stoney described him as a longtime personal friend: Lincoln Saunders, who has served as Virginia first lady Dorothy McAuliffe's chief of staff, will work in the same position in Stoney's administration.

"Today, I'm flanked by two individuals I believe will set not only our administration up for success, but the success of our city," Stoney said at a news conference in the offices of ChamberRVA.

Cuffee-Glenn came to Richmond in May 2015 from Suffolk, where she was the city manager. She replaced Byron C. Marshall, who departed abruptly in 2014 amid uncertain circumstances.

At City Hall, Cuffee-Glenn has positioned herself as a reformer, attempting to address problems in the city's Finance Department and with budgeting. Stoney said Cuffee-Glenn impressed him with her passion for public service and her work in Suffolk to get that city's bond rating up to AAA status.

"In many of the conversations I've had, I've told her that is a goal I want to shoot for," he said. "That is our BHAG — our big, hairy, audacious goal for City Hall. All right? We want to be a AAA bond-rated city, which means everything we have to do in City Hall has to be amazing."

The city's current bond rating is AA+ — the second-highest rating available. A better bond rating allows the city to secure lower interest rates when it issues bonds and generally is an indicator of good fiscal health.

Saunders has worked for McAuliffe since early last year. He also has served as finance director of the Democratic Party of Virginia, where Stoney served as executive director.

The Northern Neck native has a master's degree in agriculture policy analysis from Indiana University. He studied government at the College of William & Mary.



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Richmond Mayor-elect Levar Stoney spoke Monday at the Science Museum of Virginia prior to Hour of Code, an event encouraging students to learn more about computer science. Also Monday, the mayor-elect held a news conference to announce two hires for his administration. For more about the Hour of Code program, see Page B2.

“(He) has a great capacity to build partnerships, coalitions and alliances that I think will take the city forward,” Stoney said. “I trust him with the vision that we laid out during the campaign — to actually execute our shared agenda with the City Council, with the School Board and with the people of Richmond.”

McAuliffe, who attended Stoney’s announcement, described losing Saunders to Stoney’s administration as bittersweet.

“I couldn’t give anybody a higher recommendation,” said the first lady, describing Saunders as energetic and able to “set goals and achieve them.”

Saunders said he met Stoney while working as a legislative aide in the General Assembly. When Stoney was working on state Sen. R. Creigh Deeds’ 2005 campaign for attorney general, Stoney hired Saunders to be Deeds’ “body man.”

“I would sleep on his couch when I had to stay in Richmond,” Saunders said. “I was still a student at William & Mary. ... We just developed a really long trust and friendship and respect for each other’s work ethics.”

Saunders said that in his new role, he expects to help Stoney fill out the rest of his administration and, once Stoney takes office, will be responsible for working with city leaders and department heads.

“I look forward to building out the mayor’s team as well as working with the chief administrative officer, the deputy chief administrative officers and department heads,” Saunders said.

Stoney said he expected to make announcements about additional hires in the coming weeks.