

# Open Vallejo

## Vallejo city manager out as state DOJ moves in

By [Geoffrey King](#) | October 19, 2023



Geoffrey King/Open Vallejo

Vallejo City Manager Michael Malone speaks at a meeting of the Vallejo City Council on Nov. 15, 2022 in Vallejo, Calif.

Vallejo City Manager Michael Malone has decided to retire after less than 18 months in the position, he said in an interview Thursday.

But the decision may not have been entirely his to make.

Sources with knowledge of the matter told Open Vallejo that during a recent closed session, the city council declined to renew Malone's employment contract, which expires in April 2024. It is unclear whether that decision was the subject of a formal vote or whether Malone proffered his retirement before that could happen, a source familiar with the matter said. The sources who spoke with Open Vallejo did so on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss internal personnel decisions.

Assistant City Attorney Laura Zagaroli announced Malone's departure during a Thursday meeting of the city's Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission. Zagaroli told commissioners that the city manager was "resigning" before clarifying that Malone planned to retire.

"So it's a sad day for Vallejo," Zagaroli said. "I have nothing else to report."

Reached for comment Thursday, Malone declined to discuss the circumstances of his departure.

"It's true that I'm retiring in April, but at this time, I have no further comment," he said.

A spokesperson for the city of Vallejo did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Malone, who reports directly to the Vallejo City Council, supervises all city departments other than the City Attorney's Office. His authority includes the embattled Vallejo Police Department: Interim Vallejo Police Chief [Jason Ta](#) reports directly to the city manager.

The news of Malone's departure comes just days after California Attorney General Rob Bonta [sued the city](#) of Vallejo [alleging](#) that its police officers have violated residents' constitutional rights through a "pattern and practice of excessive and unreasonable force, using enforcement strategies that disproportionately impact people of color, and [by] performing unconstitutional stops, searches and seizures."

The city will [now be subject to](#) a five-year [consent decree](#) that imposes numerous [reforms](#) on the department. The Vallejo Times-Herald first [reported](#) that Bonta would seek a consent decree in June. The previous month, Bonta [told this newsroom](#) that a civil rights investigation into the Vallejo Police Department was "on the table."

Bonta's decision to pursue a consent decree followed reporting by Open Vallejo and ProPublica last November [revealing](#) that a previous effort to collaboratively reform the police department had stalled.

The California Department of Justice did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In a subsequent phone call Friday morning, Malone said the DOJ consent decree “had nothing to do with” him leaving the city.

“The decision was actually made in July,” he said, without elaboration.

Malone was appointed interim city manager in September 2021 following the resignation of Interim City Manager Anne Cardwell. Cardwell served in the role for just one month after [City Manager Greg Nyhoff](#) announced his [resignation](#) in July of that year. Malone became the permanent city manager last April.