

## AG job called great opportunity for Costas, area

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VALPARAISO | Although not happy at the possibility of having to adjust to another mayor, longtime city Clerk-Treasurer Sharon Swihart called Mayor Jon Costas' bid for attorney general "a great opportunity for him."

"For that, I'm happy," Swihart said. "I'm certainly not one that likes change, so that will be difficult, and it's kind of an unknown right now. There's a lot going on in the city, so that needs to continue to be monitored, but we have such good people that I don't think that will be a huge problem."

"I think he's perfectly capable of the job," she said of the attorney general's post. "That's not a question in my mind that he could do a good job. I think he's excited about the prospect."

If Costas is nominated and wins the election, Bob McCasland, a former councilman who ran against Costas in the 2007 Republican mayoral primary, said he would be a candidate to replace Costas. McCasland said Costas' announcement didn't come as too much of a surprise.

"I think he has had visions of holding state office for some time, and he has friends in Indianapolis," McCasland said. "Any time we can have a man or woman from here in a position of power in the state, it will draw attention to us. Whatever the party, it is a good reflection on us."

Porter County Republican Party Chairman Chuck Williams said, "He's getting a lot of support from around the state. He's been asked by many people to do this. I think it's an excellent opportunity for Valparaiso and Northwest Indiana as a whole to have a statewide elected attorney general, possibly the second most powerful elected official, from here."

Former Mayor David Butterfield, who defeated Costas in 1999 but lost to him in 2003, said he was not surprised Costas would seek state office.

"I always thought he wanted to be somewhere else than Valparaiso," he said.

But he was surprised Costas would announce it only three months after starting a new term as mayor.

"I don't know that being attorney general will have a direct impact on the city, but it's always a good thing for the region to have a representative at the state level because we are the forgotten part of the state," Butterfield said.

Council President Al Eisenmenger said Costas will be a hard act to follow.

"He's been very successful or Indianapolis wouldn't have noticed him," Eisenmenger said. "We've had so many good things going on in the city for the past five years. He's so community-oriented, it had to be a tough decision for him. His pride is Valparaiso and it always has been, but some doors you have to open or you go through life wondering what was behind them. His will be some big shoes to fill."