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## Popular Financial Services Manager to Retire

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After almost a quarter century, Gonzalo Silva is ready to retire. Photo C. Tyson

Calling the city's accounting operations "in shambles" when Gonzalo arrive in 1990, with just \$950,000 in reserves, Falk explains, "Today, due in large part to Gonzalo's work, the city boasts 23 consecutive balanced budgets, \$7 million in reserve, and a AAA bond rating from Standard and Poors. Only 25 of California's almost 500 cities have earned the coveted AAA rating. In an era when many cities are struggling - with some even bankrupt - Lafayette stands apart, and great credit for that goes to Gonzalo Silva."

"He personally inspects and approves every request for payment before it's processed to ensure that the taxpayer's money was being spent efficiently," says Tracy Robinson, administrative services director, who added that his skill at employee birthday "game lunches" is legendary.

Originally from Santiago, Chile, Silva came to the U.S. to attend high school, then went on to graduate from San Francisco State University, finally settling down in Moraga with his wife and young son in the early 1970s.

He's proud to report that in his entire tenure with the city of Lafayette, through countless audits, there have never been any issues; by design, the municipal accounting system is completely transparent. Anyone can investigate via the city website - expenses, revenue, salaries and benefits, spending on roads and capital improvement projects. "People who pay taxes have a right to know," explains Silva.

With a fiscal year General Fund expenditure budget of \$12.2 million, it's amazing to consider that each and every bill that keeps the city running, along with payroll for the entire 40-person staff is handled by Silva, one other accountant and one part time employee.

He instigated moving payroll in-house shortly after his arrival, saving a substantial amount in fees and keeping control of the entire process. Employees get paid every two weeks electronically with direct deposit. Bills from vendors get paid promptly as well.

Describing himself as a number cruncher and computer nerd, Silva easily made the transition from a paper-based system to computerization. He has a 401 K plan, like all city staff, no CalPERS here, and has been diligently contributing the maximum of 15 percent of his salary, along with an additional 5 percent into his retirement account.

It took him four years to make the final retirement decision, knowing he would miss his co-workers, because of little turnover, great morale and a friendly environment, "it's like working with family," he says. The feeling is mutual, Falk notes, "We will miss him tremendously."

Although he was recently in Europe, he's planning a trip to France in June, and many additional destinations in the future. He's also looking forward to spending time researching stock investments and playing the very addictive Words with Friends without interruption.

The search is on for the next financial services manager, the city is seeking an expert financial professional who can fill Gonzalo Silva's shoes. A degree is required along with management and accounting experience, and exceptional communication skills. For all the details, go to [www.lovelafayette.org/jobs](http://www.lovelafayette.org/jobs).

## More Lafayette Civic News on Page A11

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# Happy Holidays From The Hood Group

Best wishes for a joyous Holiday Season and a New Year filled with peace, health and happiness!

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## The Lafayette City Council is soliciting volunteers to fill the following vacancies.

**The Lafayette Community Center Foundation** is dedicated to renovating and improving the Lafayette Community Center. The Foundation was formed in 1983 to oversee the capital improvements and renovations necessary to transform the old Burton School into an active recreation center. OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

**The Circulation Commission** reviews matters that affect the City's right-of-way and administers the Circulation Element of the General Plan. The Commission advises the City Council on matters pertaining to traffic safety, on-street parking, and pedestrian sidewalks and bikeways. Six of the seven members of the commission shall be residents of the city and shall represent specific neighborhoods as designated by the commission. The seventh member of the commission, who need not be a resident of the city, shall either own or operate a business in the downtown. OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

**Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan Implementation Committee (DSIMPIC)** is charged with the implementation of the Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan that was adopted in 1988. The Plan guides developers and staff in making improvements to street frontage in downtown Lafayette to create a cohesive, positive visual image and provide amenities to make the downtown a comfortable, safe and enjoyable place. OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

**Environmental Task Force** The City is committed to developing and implementing environmental policies and programs that will enable the City and its residents to meet their present needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

**Lafayette Representative To The Contra Costa County Advisory Council On Aging (Acoa).** The Contra Costa Advisory Council on Aging facilitates countywide planning, cooperation and coordination for individuals and groups interested in improving and developing services and opportunities for older resident in the County. The advisory council meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 9:30am at 2425 Bisso Lane, Concord. OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

**Parks & Recreation Commission** reviews and supports effective management and operations of existing park facilities to maximize public enjoyment, continue to seek funding and develop the Community Park, Trail System and other City Parks. The Commission typically meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Community Center, located at 500 St. Mary's Road. OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

**Public Arts Committee** establishes a public art program and its administration to oversee Lafayette's public art collection, contributing to the cultural enrichment of the community by adding public art that is of the highest quality, visually stimulating, and of enduring value, ensuring that public art is incorporated into project planning at the earliest planning stage, and establishes public art gift policies and procedures. This committee will be composed of individuals who, by experience, training, education, occupation or avocation, have demonstrated knowledge of and interest in the visual arts. OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

**Youth Commission** advises the City Council on issues pertaining to teenagers in Lafayette. The Commission coordinates activities and is involved in community functions that benefit both the youth and the community-at-large. The Commission meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:00 pm in the Sequoia Room at the Community Center located at 500 St. Mary's Road. (The Youth Commission does not meet in June, July or August.) OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

Individuals interested in these volunteer positions may obtain an application on-line at [www.ci.lafayette.ca.us](http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us) or call the main office at 284-1968 and an application will be mailed to you. If you have questions related to these volunteer positions please call Joanne Robbins, City Clerk at 299-3210.