

After being re-elected, Salem Mayor David Bower touted the changes he had made in his first term and vowed that there would be more.

Some of those were finalized last Friday afternoon and involve both the fire department and the city's animal control office.

In the Salem Fire Department, Bower appointed Tom Day as new fire chief. The hunt for the next assistant chief is still on-going.

Bower said he knows Day from when he was the director of the youth football league and hired Day to organize and lead the officials for those games.

"We are real excited, I've known Tom a long time" he said. "He is a great fireman and cares about every one of his men. We are going to see where the new direction takes."

Day replaces Roger Pennington, who remains on staff as a captain.

"I can't say that Roger did a bad job," Bower said. "He was a good chief, but often times change facilitates good things and we are going to see what happens. I would never say anything bad about Roger. He did everything I asked him to do the last four years, but we are going to see what Tom can do.

"I just wanted a different leader in that position to see if we could improve on a good thing. There aren't any issues that I know anything about, I've just seen a lot of good things out of Tom and want to see what he can do. It's more of a challenge for Tom than anything."

Bower said he thinks the city has a fire department full of leaders and he said in the coming years there will be a lot of men qualified to step up and lead the department.

Bower said he also made a change in the city's animal control.

Rick Stewart will be the city's new animal control officer. Jim Diech, who had worked in that position for the past 21 years, will remain on staff as Stewart's assistant.

Bower said the change will save about \$5,000 in the city's general fund by eliminating two part-time positions.

Stewart will work 29 hours and Diech will work 35.

"I've wanted to get this done for the past four years and that's that our city animal control officer should have police powers and back up the city, should we need it," he said. "Often times the police and animal control work together. Rick is going to bring a new attitude and a fresh face. He is going to be customer service oriented and he has a passion for animals.

"I am excited to have a fresh face in animal control. Rick and I have some clear goals. We want the place clean. We know it will never smell good, but we are going to clean as best we can and do some things differently."

Long-term, Bower is hoping to discuss the possibility of blending the city and county animal control offices.

Bower said he isn't a fan of property taxes and even though he doesn't plan to seek re-election in 2015, he wants the public to know he is doing all he can to keep them down.

"The animal control budget is located in the city general fund, which is property taxes and I am trying to save as much as I can in regards to property taxes," he said. "I can tell you there are eight different entities that effect property taxes in the city of Salem. I can assure the people that the city is not causing their taxes to go up."

The city runs on \$391,000 less than it did in 2006.