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De Blasio Picks Ex-Director of Port Authority to Be Top Aide

By KATE TAYLOR and DAVID W. CHEN

Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio on Wednesday made the first big appointment of his administration, naming Anthony E. Shorris, a former executive director of the Port Authority and commissioner in the Koch administration, to be his top deputy.

Mr. de Blasio, speaking at a packed news conference in Lower Manhattan, said Mr. Shorris would become his first deputy mayor. In that post, Mr. Shorris would be responsible for running the day-to-day operations of city government, and would most likely act as mayor when Mr. de Blasio is outside of the five boroughs.

“I don’t think I know anyone who has this range of experience and achievement and who will be able to work with all elements of the government seamlessly, because he has done such an extraordinary range of work within the city government,” Mr. de Blasio said of Mr. Shorris.

Mr. Shorris, 56, currently a [senior vice president at the NYU Langone Medical Center](#), had a long and varied career in government. He served as deputy budget director and as finance commissioner during the Koch administration, and as a deputy schools chancellor during the Bloomberg administration. In 2007, he was appointed executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey by Gov. Eliot Spitzer; the next year he was removed by Gov. David A. Paterson.

Mr. Shorris said he was excited to help Mr. de Blasio put into place the liberal ideas on which his campaign was based. Mr. de Blasio ran for office pledging to seek higher taxes on the wealthy to finance expanded prekindergarten programs, and to transform the Police Department’s stop-and-frisk practice in response to concerns about disproportionate targeting of young black and Hispanic men.

“This mayor was elected with a very clear mandate from the people of New York City, a mandate to enact a bold and progressive agenda,” Mr. Shorris said.

By picking Mr. Shorris, Mr. de Blasio is turning to an old government hand who has overseen an agency far larger than anything Mr. de Blasio has run, a move that may be intended to assuage questions about Mr. de Blasio’s management experience.

“He has more knowledge and experience dealing with the budget and operational issues

confronting city government than anyone I can think of,” Kathryn Wylde, president and chief executive officer of the Partnership for New York City, said in a statement.

Mr. de Blasio also named Emma Wolfe, one of his most trusted political aides, as director of intergovernmental affairs, and Dominic Williams, who had been a top aide to Mr. de Blasio in the public advocate’s office, as chief of staff to Mr. Shorris.

Mr. de Blasio stressed, on several occasions, that he wanted everyone in his administration -- as well as city residents -- to understand that there would be “clear lines of authority.”

By doing so, he seemed to be distancing himself from his experience as a junior aide in the Dinkins administration, which was known for fractious infighting, and was criticized, fairly or not, of being unsure of or slow to respond to crises.

“There should be no question that Tony Shorris will be the leader of our administration,” Mr. de Blasio said. “We want a clear, streamlined city government with clear lines of authority, and clear lines of accountability.”

Mr. Shorris, the mayor-elect added, was a perfect fit to be his top deputy because he knows “how the pyramid works” after decades in government.

“We’re not going to have a situation where people don’t know what the chain of command is,” he said.