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Assistant city manager, finance director Jason Simpson 'no longer with' Desert Hot Springs

DESERT HOT SPRINGS — Finance director and assistant city manager Jason Simpson is “no longer with the city,” the Desert Hot Springs city manager told The Desert Sun on Tuesday.

Simpson left March 27, City Manager Rick Daniels said, without elaborating.

Manager Linda Kelly will take over until Daniels appoints an interim director. He plans to begin recruiting for a full-time replacement within the next week.

The finance director “is a critically important position at all times, but particularly during times of declining revenues and re-engineering of local government due to state thefts of local monies,” Daniels said.

The departure comes as the city nears the end of its two-year budget cycle, which calls for \$13.8 million in spending this fiscal year.

Simpson, who previously worked as assistant finance director for the city of Temecula, was hired as finance director in 2008.

He moved into the assistant city manager position in 2009.

Simpson's salary ranged from \$115,642 to \$175,000, according to the city's compensation report.

Simpson did not return a voicemail late Tuesday.

He fielded questions about the budget during a March 20 council meeting and did not refer to plans to leave.

Under Simpson's watch, the city approved its first-ever two-year operating budget. Previously, the budget had been planned out for one year.

He was also part of recent efforts to secure \$2.2 million in state grants for an aquatic center at the Community Health and Wellness Center, which is currently under construction.

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