



By ROBIN RICHARDS, News West

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City manager candidate to look for money



NEEDLES — Media in the Coachella Valley was abuzz last week with news that Desert Hot Springs City Manager Rick Daniels was in negotiations to become city manager of Needles. Finalizing a contract with Daniels appeared on the Needles City Council agenda for Aug. 13.

Council Member Linda Kidd, one of the sources quoted by Needles' neighbors far to the south, explained that candidates had been interviewed and Daniels appeared to be the best choice. "I've heard wonderful things about him," said Kidd on Thursday. "I just printed off a ton of email in support of him.

"Of course there are always two sides," she continued. "People have different opinions but I feel good with our choice.

"We wanted someone that has the background of going out and finding money," she said. "We liked what he had done in Desert Hot Springs. Sometimes it takes new eyes to see things."

Rick Daniels, candidate for Needles City Manager, sits in on a meeting of the city council. ROBIN RICHARDS, News West

Mayor Ed Paget, contacted the same day, said the search was a council matter and as the mayor he doesn't have a vote. "My impression was that some time in the next three years we were planning to get a new city manager. This happened very abruptly.

"I understood there were 11 candidates," Paget continued. "They only interviewed three and then made a decision. No one has bothered to explain why the other eight candidates weren't looked at, or if they were.

“I’ve gotten quite a few calls from people in Desert Hot Springs that said, ‘Don’t they have Google out in Needles?’

Easily-found sources on the Internet seem to be split on the subject of Daniels. One pronounced him “polarizing.” Asked if he was, Kidd replied, “Not in the least.

“He seems to be very compassionate and loves what he does,” she continued. “He’s been recruited by several cities. I think people see the value that he brings.”

“My advice,” said Paget, “was that we make sure we do a background check before jumping in. If they (the council) did that’s great; they have the right to vote on that. I don’t vote so that’s where we are.”

Paget went on to credit current City Manager David Brownlee with doing “a great job.

“I understood we were a little tight with money; now I understand we may be spending quite a little money to bring in another person. This person (Daniels) has been presented as someone who would make his own salary. I hope they’re right about that. He certainly comes highly recommended by the present mayor at Desert Hot Springs,” Paget concluded.

“I’m excited that he’s coming and look forward to working with him,” said Kidd. “I think he’ll make some positive impacts in Needles. That’s what I want.”