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Needles hires Desert Hot Springs' Rick Daniels

New city manager position will pay him nearly \$200,000 to start



Desert Hot Springs City Manager Rick Daniels, seen in this Nov. 1, 2011 file photo with the Desert Hot Springs City Council, has been hired for the same position for the city of Needles. / File, The Desert Sun

DESERT HOT SPRINGS — Needles officials have officially hired outgoing Desert Hot Springs City Manager Rick Daniels to lead their community.

The council unanimously endorsed a \$197,000 contract, with a \$10,000 pay bump each year. The three-year contract starts Sept. 16.

It will initially be a pay-cut for Daniels, who is leaving Desert Hot Springs [after an outside investigator found “insufficient evidence” to back his claims that two councilmen created a hostile work environment.](#)

He currently earns a \$217,000 base pay.

MORE: [Daniels’ resignation letter to Desert Hot Springs Mayor Yvonne Parks | Daniels’ contract with Desert Hot Springs for City Manager position](#)

“Our city has a great deal going for it, from recreation on the Colorado River, Route 66, the Historic El Garces Hotel, that is being revitalized into a regional multi modal transportation center, an 18-hole municipal PGA golf course and a vibrant and involved community,” Councilman Jim Lopez said in a statement this morning.

“With all that we are doing in Needles, we really need someone vibrant and optimistic even when confronted with opposition and we found that in Mr. Daniels.”

Daniels was at Tuesday’s meeting when Needles council voted 6-0 to hire him. He has already signed the contract, and plans to be in Needles as early as Sept. 3 to start transitioning to his new job.

Daniels was one of 13 applicants the city considered.

Daniels has described Needles as “a wonderful community by the river” that has “great potential.”

“Both Joyce and I have been impressed by wonderful and positive people,” Daniels has said. “I think it would be a great opportunity.”

Councilwoman Linda Kidd noted that the council was “100 percent in support of hiring Mr. Daniels.”

However, Needles Mayor Edward Paget — who does not vote unless the other six council members are tied — [earlier expressed reservations about the hire after reading about the controversy in Desert Hot Springs.](#)

Daniels in October filed a complaint with Desert Hot Springs accusing Councilmen Russell Betts and Adam Sanchez of workplace harassment.

The findings from an outside investigator, whose report was released this month, did not back the claims. But the probe did find Betts “disclosed confidential information discussed in closed session” and “likely recorded” at least one meeting.

Betts has repeatedly denied the accusations. The report was sent to the Riverside County District Attorney.

“Mr. Daniels was very candid and open with us about everything we asked him about and we found his openness and honesty refreshing,” Lopez said in the statement today.

“We think he is a perfect fit and, as to his former city, we wish its city council, staff and all of its residents the very best and hope they are successful in the future.”

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