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City to deny Hanson's claim

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DESERT HOT SPRINGS

Former DHS city manager wants council to uphold his final contract

By Bill Byron

The Desert Sun

A legal claim filed by former City Manager Jerry Hanson that could cost the city up to \$3 million will be rejected by the City Council at its next meeting, officials said Wednesday.

The council will be asked to vote whether to approve or reject Hanson's claim against the city at the Dec. 6 meeting, interim City Manager Patricia "Corky" Larson said Wednesday.

That vote, she said, is merely a formality. The council rarely, if ever, votes to approve a legal claim against the city.

"It's standard that it's denied," she said.

Vice Mayor Mary Stephens agreed.

"Yes, I think we'd be stupid not to, we reject most claims," she said. "To be honest with you, I'm just not worried about this lawsuit."

Councilman Gary Bosworth would not disclose how he plans to vote, but implied that he would oppose the claim.

"My past actions speak very strongly as to how my probable vote will be," he said Wednesday.

Bosworth is the only current member of the council to have voted against one of Hanson's contracts.

Bosworth consistently voted against the contracts, which, The Desert Sun reported, had been authored at least in part by Hanson himself.

One of the most controversial clauses in one of Hanson's earlier contracts was one that paid him more than \$90,000 in severance pay, even though he did not quit, was not fired and continued working for the city.

The Desert Sun also reported that rollover clauses in some of the 10 employment contracts allowed him to be paid for 1,700 hours of vacation and sick time over 20 months' time.

The rejection of Hanson's claim about his final contract will begin the legal clock ticking on the amount of time that Hanson has to respond, likely with a lawsuit, Larson said.

Following the expected denial of the claim on Dec. 6, he will have six months to file suit, she said.