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## **Adam Sanchez wants to focus on Desert Hot Springs' strengths**

### **Adam Sanchez will be sworn in as mayor Dec. 3**

**DESERT HOT SPRINGS** — Following a five-hour recount Thursday of ballots cast in the Nov. 5 Desert Hot Springs mayoral race, the Riverside County Registrar's Office announced that Adam Sanchez will remain the officially certified mayor-elect of this Coachella Valley city.

Outgoing Desert Hot Springs Mayor Yvonne Parks, who trailed Sanchez by 12 votes, requested the recount.

Parks could not be reached for comment Thursday, but her attorney Dave Baron, said the results are what they are.

"That's how it goes, no sour grapes," Baron said. "The vote's certified. And we thought the registrar did a good job. They were very professional and it was an open process."

Sanchez, who will be sworn in as mayor Dec. 3, said he plans to sit down with each council member and discuss how the city should move forward to overcome its current fiscal problems.

On Tuesday, council unanimously declared a fiscal emergency after staff determined that the city would need to cut its existing budget by nearly \$5 million in order to break even by June 30 and avoid further fiscal troubles.

Sanchez said he wants to focus on the city's strengths, particularly its mineral hot springs. "We have to build off of that market and promote our resources," he said.

Following the Nov. 5 election, Sanchez lead the race with 1,042 votes, or 43.2 percent, to Parks' 1,030 votes, or 42.7 percent. Economist John-Paul Valdez received 340 votes.

During Thursday's action, Sanchez and Parks each picked up one vote, however, Sanchez's 12-vote lead remained.

Parks asked for the recount amid her supporters' claims of voter fraud, however, Parks never formally included that allegation in her request.

And according to Sanchez, as of Thursday night, Parks had yet to concede the race.

"I've had no contact with her," Sanchez said, adding that he and the outgoing mayor were together in Riverside on Thursday while the recount took place.

But, Sanchez said, once Parks was told she had lost she left and said nothing to him. He added late Thursday that he had yet to receive a call from Parks.

Baron said Thursday night, "I don't think there's a need to concede the election's been certified."

Baron said 13 of Parks' challenges were overruled.

Her challenges included ballots that showed the voter had marked the write-in box, but didn't write in a name. Those boxes were next to where voters endorsed Parks and Baron said, "We think they were for Yvonne."

Besides Sanchez, Councilman-elect Joe McKee will be sworn in as well on Dec. 3.

McKee outpaced incumbent Councilwoman Jan Pye in the Nov. 5 election.

However, according to Desert Hot Springs municipal code, there will be a seat open on council once Sanchez takes over as mayor and Pye, who received the next highest amount of votes, will return to council.

**Reporters Erica Felci and Denise Goolsby contributed to this report. Reza Gostar can be reached at (760) 778-4586.**

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