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DHS Boys and Girls Club future uncertain

DESERT HOT SPRINGS, Calif. -

In a move the city says will save it \$250,000 a year, Desert Hot Springs officially ended its contract with the Boys and Girls Club.

Interim city manager Bob Adams says the city unanimously made the decision in the wake of facing a multi-million dollar deficit.

But then we asked Mayor Adam Sanchez.

"The decision was made basically because of accountability and transparency with the contract that we have, that didn't specify exact activities, programs and budgets involved," Sanchez said.

The Boys and Girls Club says the contract is fine, and questions whether the city will negotiate a new contract with the club.

"I really don't know at this point. I've been advised by my board of directors to explore every option that might be available to us," said Jim Ducatte, CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs Foundation.

Sanchez says he and several council members want to develop a new youth and family program to be run at the health and wellness center. We asked if that meant it would no longer be the Boys and Girls Club.

"It would basically be the Community of Desert Hot Springs health and wellness center programs," Sanchez said.

"It's pretty obvious to me the mayor has an ax to grind," Ducatte said.

Mayor Sanchez previously served as the president and CEO of the Desert Hot Springs Boys and Girls Club. But he got terminated because he opposed the Boys and Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley coming in.

"I ran the Boys and Girls Club for 10 years. I have 25 years of experience in youth programs in the Coachella Valley, so for us it will not be an issue for us to run it for much less money."

The club costs \$420,000 per year to operate. Ducatte says it's the most lean of the five clubs. He adds any less would sacrifice the quality of the services.

"Could you do it for cheaper? Yes, you obviously could, we would not be interested in running the club that way," Ducatte said.

Sanchez assures everything about the program would look the same except for the name. If that's the case, Ducatte says the club will look to open in a new location in the city.

"If it doesn't work out in the health and wellness center, again we're looking at all our options right now," Ducatte said.