

Desert Sun

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Manager of city to step back

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Council in Desert Hot Springs hails Hanson feats

By Nelsy Rodriguez

The Desert Sun

City manager Jerry Hanson will leave his position as the "CEO" of Desert Hot Springs and will return today as interim city manager until a replacement is found.

City Attorney Corky Larson announced the change following a Tuesday night closed-session City Council meeting that included "City Manager Review" on the agenda.

"It will save the city over \$150,000 a year when a city manager is hired," said Mayor Matt Weyuker at Tuesday's regular council meeting, addressing previous community concerns that the deal made for Hanson had possibly been too sweet.

But, Weyuker said in an interview after the meeting, Hanson has not formally submitted his retirement request.

Hanson, according to his current contract, became eligible to retire in mid-May. He was unavailable for comment after Tuesday's meeting.

At Tuesday night's open-session meeting, Hanson announced that the city's bankruptcy, first settled in October, had been officially discharged by the courts on June 2.

Teresa Thompson, spokes-woman for the city, said Hanson will maintain his position as city engineer.

Councilman Hank Hohenstein, Vice Mayor Mary Stephens and Mayor Wey-uker read from statements at the beginning of the open council meeting, praising Hanson for bringing the city out of bankruptcy and retaining millions of dollars in the city's reserve funds.

The nearly 40 people in attendance burst into applause as Hanson's achievements were listed.

"There may still be some grumbling with respect to the contract," Hohenstein said. "(But) you get what you pay for."

In March, Hanson's W-2 form was leaked to the media. After the leak, the city confirmed in a news release that the city manager, on the job two years, had received \$322,809 in 2004, about three times what the public thought he was paid annually, with a listed base pay of \$132,000.

The city explained Hanson had cashed in a large number of vacation/holiday/sick hours and a car allowance and also received a severance package.

He was able to, according to a clause in his contract, collect severance pay even though he was not resigning or being fired.

After 2004, Hanson's new city manager contract began.