

## Desert Sun

Estimated printed pages: 2

July 9, 2003

Section: Local

Page: B1

### DHS looks into possible conflict by city manager

*Jose Paul Corona*

*Staff*

*The Desert Sun*

Son of city official works for company that did city project

By Jose Paul Corona

The Desert Sun

DESERT HOT SPRINGS - The City Council has formed a committee to investigate allegations of a possible conflict of interest involving City Manager Jerry Hanson.

At Monday's City Council meeting, resident Karl Baker brought to light the fact that the City Council entered into a contract with Hanson's son's employer.

In a phone interview Tuesday, Jerry Hanson acknowledged the city in February entered into a contract with Tyco Fire and Security where his son, Justin, works.

Justin Hanson and the firm's Riverside office installed a closed-circuit camera system at the city's corporation yard after it had been vandalized on several occasions.

"The city got a good buy," Jerry Hanson said of the security system.

Tyco submitted two of the four bids for the project. One of its bids was for \$3,400; the other for \$8,600. It's unclear which the city approved.

Hanson defended his son, saying he works for one of the biggest security alarm firms in the area and therefore should not be barred from doing work for the city. Tyco Fire and Security is one of the four operating divisions of Tyco International Ltd.

"I have no benefit or interest whatsoever," Hanson said of the contract.

Hanson, who at the time the contract was signed served as the manager of the city's engineering department, did not give final authorization to the contract.

Sam Scott, city manager at the time, brought the bids to the council, which ultimately made the decision.

Jerry Hanson said that he alerted Scott that Justin Hanson, who is listed on the bid as "security consultant," was his son.

He said Scott told him the relationship "wasn't that big of a deal."

In March 1999, Bob Wilburn, who was then the city manager, was fired by the council after it was learned he used nearly \$10,000 of city funds to pay for computer services and equipment provided to the city by his son, David.

"I think that any allegation regarding a possible contract with a blood relative is a serious allegation, especially considering the past history of our city," Councilman Gary Bosworth said after the council meeting Monday night.

Mayor Matt Weyuker appointed Councilwoman Mary Stephens and Councilman Will Pieper to a review committee that will look into the matter, Hanson said.

They will discuss the matter with a city attorney who handles personnel issues and make a report to the council Aug. 5.

Baker, a previous unsuccessful City Council candidate, said that he would like the matter to be thoroughly investigated.

The council should put Jerry Hanson on administrative leave and appoint someone to investigate the allegations, Baker said.

"This is awful," Baker added.

---

Copyright (c) The Desert Sun. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. by NewsBank, inc.