



[Click here to return to article](#) | [Return to Desert Cities Coverage](#)

Behind the story: What did it take to get information on Hanson's salary?

The Desert Sun
July 17, 2005

Since the city of Desert Hot Springs confirmed the salary figure on City Manager Jerry Hanson's tax form 3½ months ago, The Desert Sun has been trying to understand how he earned his money.

Here's what happened:

March 23: Desert Hot Springs issues a news release confirming that City Manager Jerry Hanson's W2 form showed him making \$322,809 in 2004. It was released after Hanson's W2 was leaked to reporters.

March 25: Desert Hot Springs staff meets with The Desert Sun editorial board to discuss Hanson's pay. The Desert Sun also files a public records request asking for a number of documents relating to Hanson's compensation, including an itemized breakdown of his pay and the total number and cash value of all vacation time cashed in. Under California law, the city has 10 working days to respond.

March 29: Desert Sun reporters Nelsy Rodriguez and Brian Joseph meet with Hanson, city spokeswoman Teresa Thompson and Councilman Hank Hohenstein to discuss Hanson's pay. Hanson says his pay can all be explained in his contracts. He recommends the reporters file a separate records request asking for just his contracts. The reporters file the request, and the contracts are subsequently turned over.

April 8: Desert Hot Springs responds to The Desert Sun's original records request. The city, as state law allows, asks for an additional 14 working days due to the "voluminous" amount of records requested.

mid-April: The Desert Sun begins reviewing Hanson's contracts.

May 2: The city responds to The Desert Sun's public records request. The majority of the request is rejected, including the request for an itemized pay breakdown and the total number and cash value of all vacation time cashed in. The city rejects those items because that information "may be calculated from City Manager Jerry Hanson's employment contract(s), which are now in your possession for review," city officials tell the newspaper.

May 6: The Desert Sun shows Desert Hot Springs its calculations based on Hanson's contracts. The city suggests a meeting with finance director Linda Kelly, but is unable to schedule one until later in May.

RELATED

- ▶ [Who is Jerry Hanson?](#)
- ▶ [What is Hanson worth?](#)
- ▶ [Deep digging required in Hanson case](#)
- ▶ [Under glare, Hanson calls it quits](#)
- ▶ [DHS manager resigns, cites questions](#)
- ▶ [City manager earns formidable raise](#)
- ▶ [City representatives walk fine line when acting as private citizens](#)
- ▶ [COP chief resigns under threat of dismissal](#)
- ▶ [Complaint filed against Hanson by Bosworth](#)
- ▶ [Council opens itself up to investigation](#)
- ▶ [DHS City Council went about grand jury probe the wrong way](#)
- ▶ [Closed council meeting riles public](#)
- ▶ [Council to vote on grand jury probe](#)
- ▶ [Official seeks truth in property dispute](#)
- ▶ [City manager scrutinized over land buy](#)

May 24: Reporters Rodriguez and Joseph meet with finance director Kelly. She tells them Hanson's salary cannot be calculated just from his contracts. She says the reporters need to request a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between the city of Desert Hot Springs and the Desert Hot Springs Employees Union. The reporters request it and the city turns it over.

June 7: Desert Hot Springs officials, at the urging of The Desert Sun, turn over Hanson's 2004 payroll register. The register includes many payroll codes, such as 4572, HTHAD and AREIM, for which The Desert Sun does not have a key.

June: The Desert Sun repeatedly asks Desert Hot Springs City Hall for an explanation of how to read the payroll register. City officials refuse.

July 13: Attorneys for The Desert Sun and the city meet. The city agrees to turn over a key for the payroll codes and arrange for an interview with Kelly, the finance director.

July 15: Reporters Joseph, Rodriguez and Erica Solvig interview Kelly and get the key. Kelly says some of the figures on the payroll register are not accurate and that The Desert Sun would have to request more documents. The Desert Sun asks how many vacation and sick hours Hanson receives in a year, and Kelly and the city staff said they would get back to the reporters. The Desert Sun continues to wait for that information.
