

Desert Sun

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More details arise in DHS probe

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Glance: The investigation

The committee appointed to investigate whether City Manager Jerry Hanson violated the city ethics code is scheduled to make a report at the council's next regularly scheduled meeting on Aug. 5.

In the meantime, the council on Friday scheduled a special meeting for Monday that includes a closed-session discussion of Hanson's performance evaluation.

Former official claims Hanson knew of rules

By Jose Paul Corona

The Desert Sun

DESERT HOT SPRINGS - City Manager Jerry Hanson, who is being investigated on conflict of interest charges surrounding the hiring of his son's employer for a city contract, had previously tried to get his daughter a job with the city.

In a phone interview, former City Manager Joe Guzzetta, said that Hanson, while serving as director of public works, suggested last year that his daughter be hired for a short-term project.

Believing that it could be a conflict of interest, Guzzetta said, he contacted City Attorney Steve Quintanilla about the matter.

Guzzetta recalled that Quintanilla said it could be a conflict unless a number of conditions were met. When the information was forwarded to Hanson, he ultimately decided to drop the idea, Guzzetta recalled.

Hanson would not comment on the matter Thursday when reached via telephone at a California League of Cities Conference in Monterey.

"I have suggested to Jerry that he not talk to the press on this issue until the investigation is through," Councilwoman Mary Stephens said Thursday.

Quintanilla would not comment on the conflict of interest inquiry that Guzzetta made, citing attorney-client privilege.

But Quintanilla did say he has conducted conflict of interest workshops and has used hypothetical situations when discussing the hiring of blood relatives with regard to the city's ethics code.

Councilman Gary Bosworth has said that during those workshops Quintanilla stressed that it is prohibited in the code of ethics from doing any type of work with blood relatives.

The City Council on July 7 formed a committee to investigate the first allegation that Hanson violated the city's code of ethics following a public council meeting where resident Karl Baker made the claim.

Stephens and Councilman Will Pieper, who could not be reached for comment, were appointed to the committee.