

## Desert Sun

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### Our voice

*Eski*

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*The Desert Sun*

DHS city manager lacks leadership

Council should sever ties with Hanson, begin anew

Desert Hot Springs City Manager Jerry Hanson has not provided the kind of professionalism the city needs from its top manager; the City Council should cut its losses and let him go.

It should do that today and not prolong the agony. The City Council has scheduled a special meeting for today that includes a closed session discussion of Hanson's performance evaluation.

We've seen enough of Hanson's performance to know that he is not a good fit for the city. At the time he was hired, the city agreed to pay him \$115,000 per year plus benefits; the City Council should take that money and more if necessary to hire a professional who can move the city forward.

Desert Hot Springs has a lot of assets; it is poised to encounter its greatest growth spurt during the next 20 years, which makes it all the more critical to have a strong, professional City Council and city manager. Competent leaders are needed to navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead and to flourish. That will not happen with Hanson as manager.

The case against Hanson has been building almost since the day his appointment went into effect - Feb. 12. He has committed a series of political faux pas that are costing the city its credibility with taxpayers.

Hanson's latest misstep has triggered an investigation into possible conflict-of-interest charges that center on the city hiring his son's employer for a city contract.

At issue is an \$8,600 contract the City Council entered into with Tyco Fire and Security, where Hanson's son, Justin, works to install security cameras.

The council unanimously approved the contract Feb. 4. Council members say they had no knowledge of the father-son relationship at the time. It was the first and only time Tyco has submitted a bid to the city, according to the city clerk.

Even though Hanson had not yet been appointed as manager, he interviewed for the position on Feb. 1. Knowing full well he could be the city's next manager, Hanson should have disclosed the relationship, especially in light of the fact that he had been warned of this type of thing in the past.

Hanson, while serving as director of public works, suggested last year that his daughter be hired for a short-term project, according to former City Manager Joe Guzzetta. Concerned it might be a conflict of interest, Guzzetta contacted City Attorney Steve Quintanilla, who advised it could indeed be a conflict of interest unless certain conditions were met. Hanson ultimately dropped the idea.

The case against Hanson revolves around more than just his apparent desire to help get employment for his children.

It also was Hanson's idea to extend current City Council members' terms by one year. It was an ill-conceived idea introduced just as the filing period opened for re-election to the City Council. It was a blatant disregard for the electorate and unnecessary; if voters want to extend council members' terms, they can do so by voting for them in the next election.