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No battery charges filed against Hanson Incident was investigated by authorities

By Jose Paul Corona
The Desert Sun
August 1, 2003

DESERT HOT SPRINGS – City Manager Jerry Hanson will not be facing battery charges.

Alex Bias, chairman of the city's Economic Development Commission, claimed that Hanson assaulted him during a meeting the two had Monday at City Hall.

He filed a report with the Desert Hot Springs Police Department shortly after the alleged incident.

The police department conducted an investigation and submitted a report to the Riverside County District Attorney's office on Thursday morning.

Shortly after, Assistant District Attorney Sue Steding said no charges would be filed, which was first reported at thedesertsun.com

"Well, to be quite honest, I'm not surprised," Bias said.

When reached Thursday on his cell phone, Hanson said the city attorney advised him to not discuss the matter.

Mayor Matt Weyuker said he's glad it's over so city officials can focus on the city's best interest and get the city on good financial ground, he said.

"I'm really sorry that all this has happened," Weyuker said.

Bias claimed that Hanson grabbed his arm and forcefully threw him out of his office and into the lobby of City Hall.

Hanson disputed the charges and said that he merely "guided" Bias out of his office.

Hanson's claims were backed up by his assistant, Candi de Lima.

Bias was gently nudged out of the door, de Lima said Monday. Hanson "was not forceful in the least."

According to a copy of the police report obtained by The Desert Sun, de Lima and other witnesses corroborated Hanson's version of the incident.

"Mr. Bias was agitated. That was the expressed concern (of City Hall employees who saw the incident)," Steding said.

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What is battery?

Battery is the wilful and unlawful use of force or violence by one person against another.

The use of force or violence is not unlawful when done in self defense or in defense of others.

Battery is "always and only a misdemeanor" and is punishable by a maximum penalty of six months in county jail or a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or both, said Assistant District Attorney Sue Steding.

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Hanson is being investigated on conflict-of-interest allegations surrounding the hiring of his son's employer for a city contract.

On July 15, Bias held a press conference to ask the City Council to place Hanson on administrative leave while he is being investigated, which the council has not done.

Bias also mailed out about 1,300 petitions to the city's registered voters asking them to pressure the council.

Councilman Will Pieper and Councilwoman Mary Stephens were appointed by Weyuker to a special committee to investigate the allegations.

Stephens and Pieper are scheduled to make a report on their investigation at the council's next regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday.

Jose Paul Corona can be reached at 778-4409 or jose.corona@thedesertsun.com

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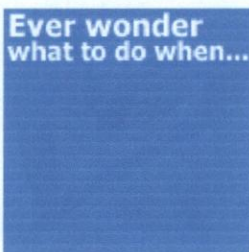
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