

One City Manager Examined

Daniels – One City Manager Examined

Daniels Finally Getting Performance Review

One city manager who always seems to escape the consequences is up for review by a city council that could be taking a steps towards retaking control of the city as elected representatives of the community.

The standard Council Agenda Notice posted last Thursday for the next Desert Hot Springs city council meeting listed a routine performance evaluation of city manager Rick Daniels. The January evaluation of Daniels was canceled due to family issues and rescheduled for Tuesday [February 8] in closed session.

However, without fanfare or explanation, a special meeting of the council was called for and posted Friday [February 3] notifying the public of a meeting Monday [February 7] also to discuss the performance of Daniels.

This looked to be an unprecedented two-day performance evaluation of Daniels who remains one of the highest paid city managers in all of the Coachella Valley. Suddenly, on Monday morning, city attorney Rubin Duran canceled the Monday meeting with no official explanation.

Daniels has endured his occupying the office longer than most city managers. The average length of employment for California city managers is four years. The city has endured five long years of negative publicity and controversy created by Daniels.

Fans of Daniels point to new city streets, sidewalks and a safer city.

Critics of Daniels credit police officers, not Daniels, as making the city more safe and say much of the street repaving and sidewalk funding was in place prior to Daniels. It's no secret the poor city has lost millions of dollars under Daniels management as Daniels "leadership" gave away money for a non-existent music festival, an expensively ruined hotel, purchasing overpriced vacant lots and mismanaging downtown redevelopment. Recent allegations of Daniels violating city purchasing and personnel policies have further eroded support for Daniels who has a mining degree from Oregon State.

Daniels has dug himself out of many political holes in the past but his drill may not be so sharp as it once was.

The election of council member Adam Sanchez and the re-election of Russell Betts marked a turning point for the city as they have been diplomatic and courteously outspoken in taking Daniels to task for his blunders. Even council member Pye appears to have finally opened her eyes to view Daniels in a different light.

Only Mayor Yvonne Parks and council member Scott Matas prefer hiding their heads in the sand instead of seeing the Daniels as he really is. Although Daniels has dug both Parks and Matas two very nice and attractive holes to hide in, the warning trumpet of recall can be heard and is moving the public to dance. Parks and Matas operate in peril so long as that recall tune is playing.

While Monday and Tuesdays performance evaluation of Daniels is a personnel matter held in secret behind closed doors, we suggest the council consider and discuss that Daniels has overstayed his welcome.

There are several issues for the council is to consider. Does the city have sufficient cause to terminate Daniels without handing him the more than \$250,000 golden parachute of a year's salary?

We believe that Daniels failures are inescapable and gross. Daniels repeated violations of city purchasing and personnel policies are an egregious offense, possibly criminal. Enough is enough. The city simply can not afford more of Daniels mistakes.

There must be consequences for Daniels. The answer for the city is a new city manager. To Daniels, we wish him good luck in finding a new job in a community as gullible and as politically uninvolved as Desert Hot

Springs.

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