

Atchison Commission: Berger approved as City Manager; pool fees remain unchanged
(KAIR)--The City of Atchison officially has a new City Manager.

That follows action of the Commission Monday evening approving the contract agreement for Becky Berger to formally begin serving in that position.

The vote to approve the agreement followed an executive session of the Commission.

Upon returning to their open meeting, the Commissioners voted 4-1 to approve the agreement.

Commissioner Charlie Perdue cast the lone no vote.

"I'm just excited to be officially in the role now," Berger said, following the vote. "It's been challenging and fun the last seven months doing the job, and I'm very excited to be able to hire somebody to replace my old position. There's a lot of things I want to hit the ground running and get going, so I'm looking forward to it."

The City Manager's position became vacant following the resignation of Trey Cocking last year, who ended his duties August 30.

Since that time, Berger has served as Interim City Manager.

She had served as Finance Director/Assistant City Manager since 2013.

With the emphasis placed on operational costs, Monday's meeting of the Atchison City Commission also included a focus on the future admission fees of the municipal swimming pool.

Deputy Public Works Director Clinton McNemee presented the matter to the Commission. "It was a topic that kinda popped up in the Park and Forestry Board meetings a couple years ago, then it kind of got put on the back burner as we focused on some other projects. We've recently reignited that conversation. The proposal is to raise the base admission rate from \$1 a person to \$2 a person in hopes to reduce the subsidy that it is to run the pool every year."

Mayor Allen Reavis, following McNemee's presentation, spoke first, saying he opposed the increase. "I personally will oppose any change in the rate. It's increased attendance, it's a lot more affordable for a lot of people."

Commissioner Shawn Rizza, a former member of the Park and Forestry Board, cited the operations deficit as a reason to support the increase. "We had a budget deficit of \$98,000 last year...that doesn't include any improvements we made in the pool, any concrete work and stuff like that. We are by far the lowest priced pool in the area."

Following the discussion, Reavis called for a motion on the increased admission fee.

Rizza moved for the increase, but the motion died due to the lack of a second.

Instead, with the majority of the Commission apparently favoring no change, the fee will remain in place at \$1 for the upcoming swimming season.

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