

Hiawatha Commission removes fire chief

**(KNZA)--The Hiawatha City Commission voted Monday evening to remove Gene Atland from the position of Fire Chief, effective immediately.**

**Commissioner Brian Shefferd made the motion during his designated time at the end of the meeting, saying he believes the fire department should be able to select their own chief.**

**The motion to remove Atland was approved on a 3-2 vote. Joining Shefferd in approving the motion were Commissioners David Middendorf and Evans Woehlecke. Voting no were Mayor Bill Collins and Commissioner Becky Shamburg.**

**Shefferd said he has nothing against Atland, but just believes the fire department should be able to recommend who they want to fill the position.**

**The Commission appointed Atland as fire chief in November 2019, without recommendation, after voting to terminate Ryan Shockley as fire chief.**

**Assistant Chief Paul Shaefer will be notified that he will be Acting Fire Chief until a recommendation and appointment are made to fill Atland's unexpired term.**

**The position of fire chief is up for appointment in May 2022.**