

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.