

TIMES-GAZETTE

City manager resigns: 'Time to move on,' Johnson says

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Jay Johnson (front) sits in the audience at Thursday's City Council meeting. His resignation was accepted early in the meeting, at which time he left the City Hall Annex.

T-G Photo by Jason Reynolds

Shelbyville City Manager Jay Johnson's strained relationship with the City Council ended Thursday night with no comment from either him or elected officials.

Johnson's resignation was accepted during Thursday's City Council meeting. The city's

purchasing and IT director, Lori Sadler, was appointed interim city manager. The search for a new city manager is expected to start soon.

Few comments

Johnson did not make a comment when the council amended its agenda to add his letter of separation and a motion to appoint an interim manager. The Times-Gazette approached two council members after the meeting but was referred to city attorney Ginger Shofner.

Johnson told the T-G, "I felt this severance agreement was in my best interest and the best interest of the city. I think it was time to move on."

Shofner released a statement after the meeting saying, "The Mayor and City Council would first like to thank Mr. Johnson for his nearly six (6) years of service to the City, and for the accomplishments and matters that he has guided the City through during his tenure.

Council member Henry Feldhaus III spoke to the Times-Gazette this morning about Johnson.

"He was the best city manager we've ever had," Feldhaus said. "I've been hanging around City Hall since the '70s. We had zero lawsuits. He inherited a city with numerous big lawsuits and he handled them superbly."

Feldhaus credited Johnson's handling of emergencies like the flume collapse and what he said was a financially challenged solid garbage collection service that the city was thinking of ending.

Offered to resign

"Mr. Johnson approached the City with the offer to resign and the parties agreed that it was in the best interests of both the City and Mr. Johnson to accept that offer. The City wishes him the best of luck in his future endeavors," the city's statement reads.

Sadler told the Times-Gazette after the meeting she intends the appointment to be short-term until a replacement is found. She said she enjoys her job in purchasing, where she has worked for 23 years come August.

Shofner also said in the statement that, "Looking ahead, the Mayor and City Council are united in their confidence and support of interim City Manager appointee Mrs. Lori Saddler, a long-term City employee and Director of the Purchasing and IT Department. They know that with her depth of experience she will be able to assist the City's strong staff of department directors in keeping the City operating smoothly during this transitional period.

"Those directors, and the entire City employee work force, have the full support of the Mayor and City Council. The City is looking forward to moving in a new direction and will begin the process of searching for a new City Manager in short order."