
Brown to take over Parks and Recreation Department

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Posted Jul 11, 2017 at 5:33 PM
Updated Jul 11, 2017 at 11:04 PM

Jason Brown, chief deputy with the Henderson County Sheriff's Office, will take over as director of the county Parks and Recreation Department Aug. 1, after an internal county review resulted in Director Tim Hopkin being reassigned.

County Manager Steve Wyatt said the decision was made about a week ago, following an evaluation conducted with the help of County Business and Community Development Director John Mitchell that was prompted by feedback and input.

Brown could not be reached for comment Wednesday, as he is away on a mission trip with Mud Creek Baptist Church and a high school group, Maj. Frank Stout said.

"My feeling is that the needs of the organization and the needs of the community will be better served with some fresh blood and new leadership," Wyatt said.

The county manager said he's been "very impressed" with Brown's ability, and thinks Brown will bring very strong leadership and management skills to the department.

Brown will lead about 12 employees and manage a budget of roughly \$1.8 million.

He has a background in law enforcement, going back to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and has continued to move up the ranks of law enforcement and management, Wyatt said.

"What we're really looking for is someone who can manage people, work with the public, solve problems and be accountable," he said. And while Brown doesn't have a degree in parks and recreation, "Jason has all those qualities."

When Brown was working on his Master of Public Administration, he would ask Wyatt questions about government and management, Wyatt said, adding that he's had his eye on Brown as someone who is very capable.

Hopkin took over the department from an interim director in 2007 following the resignation of the director. He will now fill one of several current vacancies in the department, taking on the role of recreation program supervisor, a position that will play to his strengths, Wyatt said.

He said Hopkin is really good with certain athletic programs, such as soccer, a program that's big in the county and continues to grow.

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