

cdapress.com

The Coeur d' Alene Press  
Phone number: 208-664-8176  
Address: 201 N. Second St  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

## Athol recall sought

By BRIAN WALKER/bwalker@cdapress.com | Posted: Wednesday, August 6, 2014  
12:00 am

**ATHOL** - An Athol resident is hoping to recall three city council members amid embezzlement allegations against the former city clerk.

Susan Richmond has gathered 20 signatures from residents on three separate petitions requesting to recall council members Mary Zichko, Josh Spencer and Shane McDaniel.

Richmond believes the council members have been slow to get to the bottom of the embezzlement allegations involving former city clerk Sally Hansen and accuses them of holding illegal meetings in the past.

"A lot of citizens are concerned," Richmond said.

Richmond submitted the 20 signatures to City Hall on Tuesday, which was the first step in the recall process.

"That shows the intent," she said.

The next step will be to obtain 57 signatures, which is 20 percent of the voters who turned out for the last election. From there, the request will go to voters in November and a simple majority is needed to have the council members recalled.

The council members targeted with the petitions couldn't be reached for comment on Tuesday.

Richmond said the recent actions - or lack thereof - by the council during the aftermath of the embezzlement case have led to distrust by some citizens.

"The general public is tired of asking questions and being met with arbitrary answers," she said. "They say, 'I don't know.' Well, find out and get back to us. The public has a right to know."

Richmond believes if Hansen is found guilty for embezzling city funds, the city will get its money back.

She said residents deserve answers to how the alleged embezzlement took place and for how long.

"If this was my bank account and somebody had a hand in it, I'd want somebody to see where it started," Richmond said. "It's the taxpayers' money we're talking about."

Hansen, who served as Athol's clerk starting in 2009, was fired last month amid embezzlement allegations. Her husband, Chuck Hansen, resigned as the lead groundskeeper for the Lakeland Joint School District around the same time.

Chuck Hansen, who is also a Timberlake Fire Protection District commissioner, hasn't attended a commission meeting since May. Rudy Rudebaugh, commission chairman, said Tuesday that Hansen hasn't been in contact with the commission for more than two months.

Rudebaugh said the board can't and won't take any action regarding Hansen not being present until a 90-day waiting period passes.

Multiple sources said they believe the Hansens have left the area, as their Athol-area home is vacant. The Hansens didn't return an earlier message seeking comment.

The Press has inquired with the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office about updates on the embezzlement case, but the KCSO has not released any information since a July 10 press release, stating it was called to City Hall on June 12 to a report of possible theft of public funds.

No charges have been filed. The KCSO is working with the city on the investigation, the press release states.

Tamie Cunningham is temporarily serving as city clerk until a replacement is hired.