County boss finalists tout experience

Resumes quiet calls to start search over from scratch

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WALHALLA — The four job seekers still in the running for the Oconee County administrator's position are veteran local government managers with ample experience and impressive credentials, resumes released by the county shows.

A glance at the resumes, released Wednesday and submitted by Walter K. Munchheimer of West Palm Beach, Fla., and Hal Mason, Leonard Sossamon and Mark Watson, all residents of North Carolina, were professionally crafted without shoddy composition or spelling errors that reportedly marred some of the applications seen by a citizens' panel that participated in the search process.

The search for a new administrator appeared to be irreparably damaged when Councilman Wayne McCall recently referred to the pool of candidates as "a bucket of bad apples."

McCall said one candidate had been accused of sexual harassment twice, while another was the target of a petition drive signed by more than 400 people to have him removed from office in a previous job.

McCall said Wednesday that his comments addressed a larger pool of candidates than the final four.

However, the other four members of County Council resisted McCall's clamor, and that of others, to begin the search for a new county boss from scratch. The majority on council insisted they had four excellent choices with the final four candidates.

Council opted during Tuesday night's meeting to unveil the names of the fina four, and Chairman Reg Dexter adamantly vouched that none had blemishes on his resume or character.

"Not one of these candidates in any way, shape or form have anything to do with what was reported in the media," Dexter said during the meeting.

Although McCall reaffirmed Wednesday that he would have preferred starting a new search for an administrator, he said he would not wash his hands of the process moving forward.

"I represent the people of Walhalla. Of course I'm going to take part in the interviews," McCall said. "This is the best

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of the whole lot. This is the way it's going to be and the majority rules. That's how government works."

Despite his differences with other councilmen over the issue, McCall said he does not see himself as the odd man out.

"We may have disagreements, but we'll still be working together," McCall said.

Of the four men in the running for the job, Watson is the only one currently holding employment, according to the resumes. He is presently Director of Personnel for Union County government in Monroe, N.C., a job he's held since 1994.

Munchheimer was director of Financial Management in Palm Beach County, Fla. from 2000-2008. Prior to that he was Deputy County Manager in Fulton County, Ga., in 1998.

Mason was City Administrator in Hanahan, a suburb of Charleston from 2005 until February of this year. Previously he was Assistant City Manager in Shelby, N.C. for seven years.

Sossamon's resume states his most recent relevant local government experience was as County Administrator of Newberry from 2004-2006. Prior to that he spent more than 18 years with the city of Concord, N.C., first as Planning and Community Development Director and then as City Manager, from 1980-1998.

Additional information on the candidates will be forthcoming in the Daily Journal/ Messenger.



Jessica Nelms/Staff

Councilman Wayne McCall is pictured in this file photo. Tuesday, McCall seemingly reversed himself by endorsing a screening of four county administrator candidates.