Oconee Administrator Search

County officials dive into pool of resumes

120 applications beat Wednesday's deadline

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WALHALLA — An Oconee County official who has a hand in screening applications for the county administrator job opening said Thursday that the Oconee County Council will have a "pool of qualified" candidates to choose from.

Oconee Human Resources Director Kay Olbon said approximately 120 resumes were submitted by Wednesday's deadline in response to the county's search for a new administrator.

Olbon said that 20 or 30 of the resumes "warrant very close attention by council."

County Council asked Olbon and Joe Newton, deputy director of the Appalachian Council of Governments, to screen the resumes for those candidates that most closely meet the preferred criteria for the job. Olbon and Newton were asked to place a category 1 or 2 on those resumes that caught their attention.

Council members have until July 24 to independently review all applications and study those in category 1 and 2. At a special council meeting scheduled for Saturday, July 25, councilmen will huddle in executive session and attempt to reach a consensus on the top eight candidates.

Council Chairman Reg Dexter said he indicated to the other members — Wayne McCall, Mario Suarez and Joel Thrift — that if a consensus is not reached on the top eight he would ask to halt the process and hire a professional consultant to help them pick a new administrator.

A complete timeline and checklist of the steps leading to the hiring of an administrator is posted on County Council's home page under "Procedures: Administrative Search."

Dexter said the information online is part of the new council's pledge to voters of making local government more transparent.

At the upcoming council meeting Tuesday, the public will have the opportunity to chime in on the characteristics and qualities that candidates for the administrator's position should display. Those wishing to express an opinion will be given up to four minutes each.

Interim Administrator Kendra Brown, who did not apply for the job, took over day-to-day administrative duties following the firing of County Administrator Dale Surrett on April 14.

Council decided to put off a final selection among the top three candidates for the job until after a special election Aug. 25 between Democrat Jack Collins and Republican Paul Corbeil, who are vying for the vacant District 1 Council seat. The winner would be sworn in Aug. 26 and begin immediately participating in the final selection of a county administrator.