# Field of finalists for county boss job shrinks

## One of the top-8 picks pulls out of contention

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SENECA — The field of candidates vying for the vacant Oconee County administrator job just got shorter.

Human Resources Director Kay Olbon said Friday that one of the eight finalists for the position asked to be withdrawn from further consideration.

Beginning Monday, a panel of community leaders selected by the County Council to give their input on the selection of a new county boss could begin reviewing candidates' resumes.

During Tuesday's County Council meeting, Chairman Reg Dexter indicated that the group of community leaders could at their discretion review the resumes of not just the finalists, but of others in the pool who did not make the final cut.

More than 120 job seekers submitted their resumes in response to Oconee's search for a new administrator.

Olbon and Joe Newton, the deputy director of the Appalachian Council of Governments, pre-screened the entire pool to come up with about 30 of the most impressive candidates, which included women and minorities.

The seven community leaders chosen by the County Council include Westminster Mayor Derek Hodgin, Seneca City Administrator Greg Dietterick, school board member Rosemary Bailes, government watchdog Bozo Richards, Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority member Mendel Stone, Advocates for Quality Development President Gary Owens and former Oconee Medical Center Administrator William "Ham" Hudson.

County Council, with input from the community leaders, plans to select the final five or six candidates at a special meeting tentatively scheduled for Aug. 21.

Council wants to hold off the selection of the top three candidates until after a special election Aug. 25 to fill the empty District 1 seat between Democrat Jack Collins and Republican Paul Corbeil. Dexter said he wants the winner to participate in the final selection process.

Oconee has been without an administrator since the firing of Dale Surrett on April 14.