Finalists for Oconee's top job selected

Council to interview candidates for administrator next week

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — Oconee County is in the home-stretch of finding a new administrator after almost a year of searching.

Oconee County Council Chairman Reg Dexter unexpectedly identified four finalists for the county administrator job at Tuesday night's special meeting. The meeting had been called to take action on a staff recommendation to have an Ohio appraisal firm perform the county's reassessment of property values this year.

Making the final cut are three men and a woman. One of the men, Mark Watson, the director of personnel for Union County Government in Monroe, N.C., was the last person standing from the search that the council initiated last spring.

Although there was consensus among council members that Watson was worthy of the job, they agreed to hire a private consultant, The Mercer Group, to expand the search so they could match Watson against a new set of finalists.

After reviewing dozens of applications, the council settled on veteran Central Florida county government manager Cynthia Coto, retired U.S. Marine Maj. Gen. Patrick Howard and Timothy Scott Moulder, who is the county director in Abbeville.

Coto formerly was employed as Seminole County administrator northeast of Orlando,

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Fla. She held the job from 2006 until the Board of County Commissioner voted to terminate her contract in October 2009.

Howard retired last year as county administrator for Marion County, Fla., after seven years on the job. He worked out an arrangement to leave because, according to him, the climate had become too political and he was subjected of micro managing on the part of the commissioners.

Aside from his current stint in Abbeville, Moulder has been town administrator in Clover and "Roving Town Administrator" in the Lower Savannah Council of Governments.

Councilman Paul Corbeil said there was consensus among members in selecting the finalists.

Council members will meet with each of the candidates in executive session on consecutive days beginning next week. The candidates also will meet county staff and members of the public.

Dexter directed Clerk to Council Beth Hulse to delay next Tuesday's regular meeting until April 13. It's possible the council could be ready to make a job offer at that time.

The council unanimously agreed to have Tyler Technologies of Dayton, Ohio, conduct its reassessment of property values at a cost of $1.8 million.

Tyler President David Johnson said the company would begin work in May.

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