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Most councilmen happy with final four

Unknown if county will set millage rate tonight

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WALHALLA — Despite some disagreement on the committee charged with finding Oconee County's next administrator, a majority of the County Council is satisfied with the final four candidates it is considering.

In a submitted commentary in Saturday's Daily Journal, Councilman Wayne McCall said the process had yielded an unacceptable final list of candidates after more than 100 resumes had been whittled down to four.

Others disagree.

"As far as I'm concerned, the search is going well and according to schedule," Councilmen Joel Thrift said. "It's going according to plan and it's working."

Some on the search committee, which includes citizens and councilmen, have expressed concern over the final four, and believe the search should start over. McCall called the field of candidates a bucket of "bad apples," saying two had serious background questions that included sexual harassment for one of them.

"The criticism is always going to be there. But again, for those of us who have been in touch with the whole process from the beginning, we feel good about it for the most part," Councilman Mario Suarez said. "I think we have competent applicants, the four we've come up with. I feel we're making progress there."

The county's Human Resource Department has indicated that the county has no legal obligation to interview any of the candidates face-to-face since their identities have not been revealed.

McCall, Bozo Richards and Greg Nowell, all search committee members, have expressed disappointment in the final list of candidates. Richards and McCall said they sense urgency on the council to push the candidates through. Recently-elected Councilman Paul Corbeil said he had confidence in the process, but would not comment further.

"I will not comment on the process, but I feel we're moving forward to find the best possible administrator for this county," Corbeil said.

MILLAGE MAY BE SET

Tonight's County Council meeting is likely to include a discussion of setting the county's millage, a topic garnering increasing interest ever since Nowell went public with a claim that the county had accumulated $43 million since 2006 due to overtaxation.

Thrift said he believes millage will be set with no increase, also denying the allegation that the county overtaxed.

"It's just not so," Thrift said. "Evidently some people don't want to listen to it, but the only reason it's showing up more than usual right now is that they never did use it. But it wasn't because of overtaxation."

Suarez said he didn't think millage would be voted on tonight.