Never say never

Official: Tyler lawsuit always a possibility

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — A ranking member of the Oconee County Council would not discount the possibility that the company responsible for Oconee's reassessment could be sued.


Thrift


Dexter

Council Chairman Joel Thrift said this week that there's always the possibility that Tyler Technologies Inc. could be sued.

Almost 6,000 property owners have appealed Tyler's assessments.

Thrift said the appeals this year have surpassed the more than 5,000 filed during the controversial 2006 reassessment.

However, Thrift said he had no idea whether the county would enter into litigation, adding that County Administrator Scott Moulder would have a role in that decision.

"You can sue any day, any time," Thrift said, but cautioned it might be premature to be thinking along those lines.

Moulder has said he is not at liberty to discuss what steps might be taken toward holding Tyler accountable for its work.

Two weeks ago Moulder said publicly that there were issues with some of the data presented by Tyler, and that the county recognized there are errors in the company's data.

Moulder said the adjustment rate on appeals was more than 60 percent.

He said one of the options available to the county is to talk with Tyler about the quality of its work.

Tyler officials have declined to talk with The Journal.

Moulder said the focus of county staff is to handle appeals and he is opposed to scrapping the work done by Tyler or doing another reassessment because it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Thrift agrees with Moulder.

"Personally, I would not overturn it," Thrift said of the reassessment.

Although the number of appeals so far is approaching 10 percent of the approximately 62,500 parcels that Tyler appraised, Thrift said 90 percent have not come forward.

He said that statistically the reassessment is not out of line.

Councilman Reg Dexter argued that prior to Tyler's onsite inspections, the county relied on information from aerial photographs that have not been the most accurate.

Dexter said he's only had one phone call related to reassessment and various face-to-face discussions.

His advice to anyone who thinks their assessment might be off is to appeal by the Dec. 9 deadline.

Before he was elected to council, Dexter said he thought twice about appealing his 2006 reassessment because the notice included a warning to "be aware that it could go up" on appeal. He said that is not the case any more.

"If you think there is something wrong, take care of it," Dexter said. "Don't have fear of retribution."

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