New Oconee councilman makes debut tonight

Paul Corbeil — newly-elected for District 1 — expects to hit the ground running

By CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — After waiting four months, District 1 residents in Oconee will have a voice and vote on the County Council tonight.

Paul Corbeil takes his place with the other four councilmen for the first time since winning handily a special election against Jack Collins of Madison last week.

The 64-year-old Corbeil of Keowee Key is no stranger to council meetings. He has dutifully attended regular meetings and workshops since announcing his candidacy shortly after former District 1 Councilman George Blanchard resigned on April 21.

The County Council agreed to forgo key decisions, including hiring a new administrator, until the District 1 seat was filled.

In resigning his seat, Blanchard alluded to his difficulty working with the new majority on the council, which he referred to as a "Troika."

In a recent interview, Corbeil said he is looking forward to working with the current council. He praised the group for its teamwork, cooperation and planning and said he intends to fit in.

Council Chairman Reg Dexter intends to put Corbeil to work right away by handing out several standing committee assignments. Dexter also will give Corbeil the opportunity to appoint two more members of a "Blue-Ribbon" panel asked to review all plans and proposals related to sewer options for the Interstate-85 corridor and the Golden Corner Commerce Park.

Council is expected to discuss the mission, goals and meeting schedule for the panel, which is expected to make its recommendations in 90 to 120 days.

Dexter also plans to appoint Corbeil to the Upstate Alliance Board of Directors.

As for the search for a new administrator, council is waiting to schedule telephone interviews in executive session with five finalists for the job.

So far, none of the finalists has backed out of the process, Human Resources Director Kay Olbon said Monday. The process now turns to in-depth background checks on the five finalists.

If you go

What: Oconee County Council meeting

When: 7 tonight

Where: Council Chambers, 415 S. Pine St., Walhalla