Number of reassessment appeals drop

Oconee official says some were counted twice

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WALHALLA — Oconee County adjusted its reassessment numbers down from 6,000 after discovering that some appeals were duplicated.

County Administrator Scott Moulder said this week that the total of appeals stood at 5,571, and not more than 6,000 as stated previously.

Moulder said that appeals from some subdivisions were filed both with Tyler Technologies Inc. and the Assessor's Office, and were counted twice.

The mix-up comes as no surprise to many who witnessed the confusion that surfaced during the first few weeks of the informal appeals process.

According to the $1.8 million contract awarded to Tyler Technologies, the company was to handle informal appeals that began shortly after reassessment notices were mailed in early September.

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The contract called on Tyler to have "sufficient number of qualified contractor personnel" during the informal hearings for up to 250 person days.

However, two weeks into the informal hearings people began showing up at County Council meetings to complain about their reassessments, and whether they could be treated fairly by Tyler, which has its appraisals division offices in Ohio. Although the county first informed the public to file their appeals with Tyler, that message changed as more people complained.

Instead, people were told that if they disagreed with Tyler's appraisal they should go see the county administrator, or go to the Assessor's Office.

By late September, Tyler was forced to issue a news release to contest accusations by Councilman Wayne McCall that the company relied too much on satellite photos in appraising properties.

An outspoken critic of Tyler, McCall frequently called reassessment "a mess and absolute disaster."

At the Oct. 4 County Council meeting, a property owner said during public comments that he had to fill out a form in triplicate for each of the five property assessments he was appealing.

Moulder encouraged the public at that meeting to go through the Tyler process first, and then go to the county for further assistance, if needed.

Tyler closed its temporary offices at the Brown Building in Walhalla on Oct. 21.

The contract requires Tyler to represent the county for up to 25 person days during formal hearings of the Board of Assessment Appeals. The deadline for submitting an application and supporting evidence for a formal hearing is Jan. 16.

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