Oconee OKs more money for runway

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Oconee County officials huddled with attorneys in executive session before agreeing to fund an additional $358,850 for a runway extension project at the local airport.

The change order approved at Tuesday night's Oconee County Council meeting increases the total cost of the project to $4.8 million.

Attorney Ned Nicholson with the McNair Law firm told members that by approving the change order the county would not be waiving its right to future litigation over how the project has been handled.

County Administrator Scott Moulder has said that an engineer with the county's airport consultant, Talbert & Bright, is under scrutiny for telling the county that state regulators had issued a permit when none had been issued. On top of that, Moulder said the engineer provided the county with a bogus permit.

Nicholson said the change order simply allows the project to go forward without jeopardizing possible litigation down the road.

The additional funds will be used by project contractor Plateau Excavation on sediment control along the road the company built from Shiloh Road to the runway extension construction site.

County staff plans to work with Plateau and Talbert & Bright to reduce the cost of the $358,850 change order.

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