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Oconee mulls choices for county boss

Council asks consultant for more information on applicants

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WALHALLA — Oconee County Council Chairman Reg Dexter said Tuesday that he's satisfied with the crop of candidates provided to the county by a private consultant helping to find a new county administrator.

Dexter said The Mercer Group came up with just under 100 candidates for council to review. The number of candidates still being considered is less than 10.

Following a special meeting Monday night to review in executive session the applicants in the running for the job, officials asked Jim Mercer to provide additional information on them.

"I think we have a good group of people from which to come up with an administrator," Dexter said.

Dexter said the request for additional information on the remaining candidates would not change the timeline for hiring a new county boss.



FILE PHOTO

Oconee County Council Chairman Reg Dexter said he feels the county has good applicants for its vacant administrator post. However, Dexter and his fellow council members asked a search firm for more information on those candidates this week.

Council expects to pick a finalist by April 5 and have a contract negotiated by April 12.

The Mercer Group is a national consultant with a successful track record for helping cities, counties and government agencies fill man-

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agement positions.

Oconee County Council members engineered their own search for an administrator in which they all agreed that William Mark Watson, the personnel director in Union County, N.C., was the most qualified candidate.

However, the council then opted to hire Mercer, expand the search and have Watson compete with another set of finalists.

Ironically, a Mercer search in Horry County has Oconee's former administrator, Dale Surrett, on the verge of becoming Horry's new county boss. On April 6, the Horry County Council will vote for either Surrett or Interim County Administrator John Weaver.

The Oconee County Council fired Surrett a year ago.

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