Oconee's new interim boss settles in

Gene Klugh huddles with department heads, preps for next council meeting

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — Oconee County's new interim administrator settled into his new surroundings on his first day on the job Monday.

James Eugene "Gene" Klugh drove nearly three hours from his home near Lake Murray in Lexington County for his initiation into county affairs and day-to-day operations.

Oconee County Council Chairman Reg Dexter and Councilman Paul Corbeil welcomed Klugh and introduced him to all the department heads at a meeting in council chambers.

Klugh said he would stay on the job as long as he's needed. However, he told the group that he would not stick around if council stops actively seeking a new administrator.

Afterward, Dexter and Corbeil took Klugh to an Industry Appreciation luncheon at Borg Warner in Seneca.

Later in the day, Klugh huddled with Clerk to Council Beth Hulse and with Assistant Administrator and Finance Director Kendra Brown. Brown held the interim administrator position since June and was in charge of operations with the help of Hulse.


Klugh

During a special meeting last week, council voted to return Brown and Hulse to their previous pay levels.

Klugh intends to be up to speed in time for the next council meeting Oct. 20, and plans to function fully as the administrator while on the job.

The interim county boss said he looks forward to working in Oconee.

"I was very impressed with the people and the facilities," Klugh said. "There seems to be a lot

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going on here."

Council's plans are to have Klugh work part-time Monday through Wednesday and have arranged for him to stay at a hotel in Seneca when he's working. Klugh will be paid at a rate of $70 an hour.

Klugh has done consulting work for local government since 1993. He said that 95 percent of his work has been serving as interim administrator or manager, including three times in Abbeville County and twice each in Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton and Newberry counties.

Klugh's longest stint as an interim boss was a 10-month gig in Pickens County. He bridged the gap between the times when Tom Hendricks and Alan Ours held the job of administrator.

Council's next move is to select a professional search firm.

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