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Residents will help pick new official

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WALHALLA — A select few Oconee County residents will be asked to participate in the selection of a new county administrator.

The Oconee County Council tonight is expected to recommend eight "community leaders" to join in the review process of eight candidates that are still in the running for the job.

More than 100 job seekers applied for the vacant administrator position. Council selected the top eight from among 25 or 30 deemed as the most qualified.

Each of the four sitting councilmen will have the opportunity to recommend two names to join in the review of the finalists. A fifth councilman will join the selection process following a special election Aug. 25 between Democrat Jack Collins and Republican Paul Corbeil to fill the empty District 1 seat.

Oconee County Human Resources Director Kay Olbon said Monday she is not aware of anything such as (selecting community leaders to join in reviewing candidates for a new administrator) being previously done.

Council Vice Chairman Joel Thrift said those asked to serve could include human resource experts, business people, mayors or anyone familiar with hiring an administrator.

Council Chairman Reg Dexter has indicated that anyone asked to participate must agree to sign a confidentiality agreement to prevent any information being disclosed about the candidates. State law does not require the county to make public the identity or background of applicants until there are only three in the running for a position.

The community leaders selected would give their input to the County Council at a 9 a.m. meeting on Aug. 22. At this meeting, council is expected to go into executive session and whittle down the list of candidates to five or six.

County Council fired Administrator Dale Surrett April 14, setting in motion the search for a replacement.