

County council set to OK economic project tonight

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
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WALHALLA — Final reading to lock down a \$10.4 million investment to create 32 new full-time jobs over five years is on the agenda for tonight's Oconee County Council meeting.

Council is set to approve a negotiated fee-in-lieu-of-tax (FILOT) agreement and special source revenue credits for Project Queso, which

would occupy approximately 24.34 acres adjacent to Horton Inc. in the Oconee Industry and Technology Park off S.C. Highway 11. Backup material says the county will sell the land to the business for \$80,200. There would be a 6 percent assessment ratio for 20 years, and revenue credits for infrastructure investment for five years up to 30 percent

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE A5

COUNCIL: Committees set to meet tonight

FROM PAGE A1

on each FILOT payment. Project Queso has popped up on council agendas sporadically since September. Tonight's meeting will begin at 6 p.m. at 415 S. Pine St. in Walhalla.

Late last year, the county sold 27 acres at OITP to a Georgia-based liability company called Oconee Housing Solutions LLC that had plans for a 140,000-square-foot building at the park. The company agreed to invest \$15.4 million and create 215 new full-time jobs over a five-year period as part of the agreement.

MORE BUSINESS

After paying \$150,000 to a Utah treatment center and avoiding a discrimination suit, council will amend an ordinance about group residential developments at tonight's meeting.

Among several additions, county code would remove an exemption for accredited university housing while updating what a group residential facility is. Another addition includes language about reasonable accommodation requests, according to backup agenda material.

County administrator

Amanda Brock signed off on a settlement agreement on Feb. 1 after being given county council approval to do so in January, according to files obtained by The Journal through an open records request.

Initially, an attorney representing Elevated Youth Services wanted a lump sum payment of \$1.5 million before the end of last August in exchange for a "complete release of liability and a covenant not to sue." Last May, Oconee residents showed up en masse to protest the potential treatment center looking to settle on Walter Scott Lane in West Union.

OTHER COMMITTEES SET TO MEET

Two council committees will meet for the first time this year at 4:30 p.m. today. Councilman Paul Cain will lead the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting, again, to review code enforcement activities and introduce a stormwater program. Councilman Matthew Durham is scheduled to convene the Real Estate, Facilities and Land Management meeting.

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