S.C. 130 sewer line project complete

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SENECA — The massive sewer project connecting Duke Energy to the city of Seneca has been completed, albeit somewhat of an abridged version.

Seneca Utilities Director Bob Faires said Tuesday that the S.C. Highway 130 Sewer Project was completed in late March.

The final phase used the entire $1 million Oconee County had allocated to the project, though the lowest bid from Tugaloo Pipeline of Westminster came in at $1,066,000. That means that some of the last portions of the plans that mostly featured work along the S.C. 130 corridor near the intersection of U.S. Highway 123 were left undone.

"We pared back a little bit. What we did was decided to over-engineer, over-plan the project to begin with, because we didn't know what kind of bids we would get," Faires said.

Faires said a gas leak earlier this year near U.S. 123 and S.C. 130 as a result of Tugaloo's work had no bearing on the schedule for completion or shortened scope of the project.

"The contractor we had was very good. The gas company actually called me and said how responsive they were and how well they handled that issue," Faires said.

The previous phase of the project improved the sewer infrastructure in the Newry Mill Village. The main goal of the entire plan – connecting Duke Energy to Seneca's wastewater treatment facility – was accomplished, Faires said. Under the agreement, Seneca Light and Water will own the line and will have to pay for its maintenance and operation.

The line is expected to open up potential development up and down S.C. 130, which would then help the county recoup the cost of its investment in the final portion of the project. The city will levy capital reimbursement fees for those hooking into the sewer line in the future to pay the county back.

SENECA SUBMITS CONTRACT PROPOSAL

The city of Seneca is seeking a long-term contract worth $3.25 million from Oconee County in return for providing fire protection in the unincorporated areas around the city.

City Administrator Greg Dietterick confirmed to council during Tuesday's work session that he had discussed the contract with County Administrator Scott Moulder and had not yet heard back from him.

He told council the city's offer would be worth $650,000 a year for five years. Seneca signed a one-year extension last year for $550,000.

Moulder's countywide fire plan calls for the continuance of municipal contracts to help cover rural areas of the county. Meanwhile, city officials have said the sooner the county's answer on their offer the better, since their budgeting process will soon be in full swing.

"We need to know something ASAP," Mayor Dan Alexander said.

The cities of Westminster and Walhalla both have a full year left on both of their contracts, each of which are worth more than $200,000 each.

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