

Seneca aiming for more Proterra

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
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SENECA — The city of Seneca could be welcoming a near \$30 million in grant money for the expansion and beautification efforts connected to the Proterra electric bus program.

During Monday's City Council meeting, Council approved four motions to apply for separate grants, ranging in total funds from \$5 million to \$13.5 million.

The first grant is the "Tiger grant", which is a Federal Department of Transit fund that can be used for 'rural projects' and amounts up to \$13.5 million.

"We are going to use that money to improve North First Street from Ingles intersection to

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downtown, up to Miracle Circle," said Ed Halbig, codes official for Seneca. "We want to have designed stops for these buses so they don't interrupt traffic, make the bus stops walkable from stop to stop. We want to improve the area down by Pete's Restaurant so it doesn't flood when it rains and focus on better sidewalks."

The next grant would be for more of the same, he added, stating that a "livability grant" would tack on another \$5 million

for sidewalks and safety measures.

The third, dubbed a "state of good repair" grant would give \$5 million to Seneca for extra buses.

"Part of what we are touting is the fact that we want to be an all-electric system," Halbig added. "Which means we shouldn't be dependent on a diesel bus if one of these breaks down and can't complete a route."

This grant would also help

take care of bus facilities and even work toward having some buses stored in Seneca if a route ends in town, saving a trip back to Clemson just to start a route in Seneca the next morning.

And finally, the last grant comes from the recommendation of the Center for Transportation and Environment, which could add another \$5 million to possibly develop a training and education program that could teach interested parties about

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funds

the electric bus system and also train Proterra technicians in the city limits.

And in closing, Mayor Dan Alexander credited the late Mayor Larry Abernathy of Clemson with keeping such an open mind about public transportation over the years and during his time serving his beloved city.

"He always kept that door open," he said. "He helped us so much here in Seneca with the CAT bus and we're not even in his county. He had a vision of connecting all of our areas, even into Anderson and around the local universities. He will be greatly missed. He was a wonderful leader and visionary."