

# Seneca looks to move quickly on SenecaFest headliner

BY ERIC SPROTT  
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Looking to round out several items of business before the end of the year, there's been no shortage of activity this week at Seneca City Hall.

And at the request of one council member, there's another meeting on the docket next week to get the wheels turning on one of the city's hall-mark events.

At the urging of Denise Rozman at a meeting of Seneca City Council's events committee Thursday morning, the city will work quickly to line up the headline act for the 10th annual SenecaFest, which is set for Memorial Day weekend.

With council member Joel Ward chairing the committee meeting and mayor pro tem Ronnie O'Kelly also on hand, in addition to several other city officials, Rozman said she'd like to move as fast as possible on the project not only for planning purposes, but to get the best musical act available as well.

"The concern that I have is that we have waited and not been able to get necessarily the band we sought out to get initially," she said. "I would just like for us to make this decision a little sooner this time."

And while nothing is set in stone, as city events coordinator Riley Johnson has been asked to provide a list of potential performers prior to next week's meeting, one act was mentioned numerous times Thursday.

"We've got about four

different bands of (several) genres, and one of the ones that jumped out was The Temptations," Johnson said.

The legendary Motown act, which features one original founder and member in Otis Williams, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989 after topping the Billboard Hot 100 on four occasions with "My Girl," "I Can't Get Next to You," "Just My Imagination" and "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" in addition to producing a number of other hits.

Johnson said it would cost "anywhere between \$20,000 and \$30,000" to book the group — an increase over the \$15,000 it took to bring Jefferson Starship to Seneca last year, according to figures provided by Seneca finance officer Joel Seavey.

With that in mind, the city may mull charging admission to the potential show and moving the location to Gignilliat Field from Norton-Thompson Park, as was the case when The Charlie Daniels Band played SenecaFest in 2013.

Tickets were a modest \$5, and Johnson is confident a ticket fee would work with the Temptations, who he said drew 11,000 concertgoers to the annual Blue Ridge Fest in Pickens several years ago at \$20 per ticket.

The committee will reconvene Dec. 23 in hopes of finalizing the main act before the end of the year.

Other expenditures related to SenecaFest — including kids' rides at

multiple spots around the city — were discussed Thursday, but will be looked at in greater depth at a meeting of the Seneca Finance Committee this morning at 8 a.m.

In other news discussed Thursday, the board doesn't foresee any changes to the city's current special event offerings — including Cruzin on Main, Jazz on the Alley and the city's annual half marathon and 5K — after receiving continual positive feedback.

The Lunney House and Museum's annual Kentucky Derby event, meanwhile, was also discussed, and possible funding will be discussed at this morning's meeting as well, along with the acquisition of moveable wall units for the Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum totaling \$7,800 that Seavey said is "something we really think needs to be done now, because it's imperative for the museum to have that item."

The city is also looking to add a museum employee that would be funded through hospitality and accommodations tax funds. HAT requests for January through June for the upcoming year appear on the agenda for this morning's meeting.

Additionally on Wednesday, during an ATAX committee meeting, the Seneca Woman's Club was awarded a \$500 grant for its upcoming Thread Heads Quilt Show at the Historic Ballenger House.