Walhalla closes in on broadband deal

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
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WALHALLA — A company that provides last-mile connection services to Oconee County's broadband system and Walhalla officials are close to sealing what each side is calling a win-win deal.

Scott Loggins, president of OneTone Telecom Inc., attended a Walhalla City Council work session Tuesday night in which officials discussed his proposal.

Walhalla utilities director Scott Parris summed up the arrangement as one that would allow OneTone to place its equipment on the city's water tanks and water system sites in exchange for free service.

"There's no cost to the city for service or installation," Parris said.

Parris said Loggins approached the city about using the water plant for his wireless Internet system.

"We've wanted and needed (broadband) access at the water plant, we've needed access to the Depot, the pool and different areas around town," Parris said.



Parris

Parris said OneTone took a piece of equipment to the water tank to test it "and it's working great." According to Parris, the signal is the best he's seen out there.

"Up until then, we've had spotty service," Parris said.

Mayor Danny Edwards asked if the arrangement would benefit the county's broadband system and whether it was "a piece of the puzzle" that the county did not have.

Loggins said it doesn't benefit the county at all, but rather speaks of the capabilities available to many because the county's system is in place.

"There's so many advancements in the infrastructure and new things that will happen over time as we build out these things," Loggins said. "These ideas (are) just the tip of the iceberg to what it could do."

The arrangement would allow OneTone to expand its services to residents and businesses in the area.

Loggins said he's put the same equipment in Westminster on the city's water towers. He described the equipment as inconspicuous.

"You'll never even notice that it's on the towers," Loggins said.

Loggins added that his offer to the city includes unlimited usage.

"If you have children, you can completely understand when 10 days into the billing cycle your data is gone," he said. "It's unlimited. Not just residential, but your businesses."

Council will take a vote on the proposal at its Jan. 20 meeting.

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