

Seneca council to consider adding Juneteenth

BY ERIC SPROTT
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — An already busy time for Seneca could become even more action-packed, as city council will soon consider adding another high-profile event early next summer.

However, city administrator Greg Dieterick warned council to consider the possible addition of a Juneteenth celebration with caution, as it was not included as part of the budget for the current fiscal year.

"I think it'd probably be a good event for us to get involved in, but again, I want you to be very cautious on the funding side of it," Dieterick told council at its regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday night at city hall.

The event, tentatively slated for June 16, 2018, would be held in celebration of the June 19, 1865,



announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas — along with the at-large emancipation of African-American slaves in the South.

The celebration was first made a state holiday in Texas in 1980, and it's observed by 45 states, including South Carolina. Dieterick said after meeting with Seneca recreation director Rick Lacey, the early cost estimate for the event is \$14,900. However, the administrator warned that price tag will inevitably be higher, and he's hoping to have a more accurate figure to present

to council in time for its work session later this month.

"I believe I can get all the hard numbers by that time, but I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't remind you this is an unbudgeted event, and you know the (budget) cuts we made in order to get through this year," Dieterick told council. "We downsized on employees and didn't do raises, and there's stuff that happens constantly, so I need you to be conscious of that."

Dieterick added an unexpected, unbudgeted cost the city finds itself staring down is "at least a quarter of a million dollars" in server replacements, which city officials are assessing now.

Shelby Henderson, the manager of the Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum, added the city

event

wouldn't need to make any extra advertising considerations, as a collaboration with Clemson University on the event would help curtail costs in that regard.

"We'd have full access to Clemson University's resources, where they'd do all the packaging, designing of the logo and branding of the event," she said. "They'll put together a full marketing package, then disseminate it to all of their resources."

Should council decide to press forward with the Juneteenth event, the city would be hosting three major events in roughly six weeks, as Seneca Fest will be held on the last weekend of May, followed by the annual July 4 celebration.