Acadia OKs $29 million plan to lure plant

By STEVE BANDY
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CROWLEY — Plans to lure an aircraft plant to Acadia Parish continued Tuesday with the adoption of a $29 million proposal by the Acadia Parish Police Jury.

The proposal, submitted by the jury’s Industrial Board, includes $18 million pledged by the state, with the remainder funded from revenues from a $7 million parishwide property tax and $6 million from the as yet unnamed aircraft plant itself.

In introducing the proposal to the jury Tuesday morning, jury President Joe Baronet said he met with individuals on Sunday who expressed some dissatisfaction with the proposal.

A representative of this group, Winston Atterberry, has been spearheading efforts to convince the company to locate in Acadia and serves as liaison between the local efforts and company officials.

Atterberry characterized the present proposal as “very premature.”

He said that although he is a member of the Industrial Board, “I don’t even know what is on the proposal, but from what I’ve heard, it’s only about 25 percent of what the industry requires.”

Atterberry urged the jury to create an economic development corporation as an entity to deal with government agencies in applying for state and federal grants to assist in funding for the plant.

He said the present Industrial Board, made up of a group of volunteers from throughout the parish, has no such authority.

However, Kim Mader, parish engineer, pointed out that the jury itself can interact with the government agencies and does not require another entity to do so.

Crowley Mayor Robert Istre, chairman of the Industrial Board’s Finance Committee, said that while the proposal may not be perfect, “it will keep us at the bargaining table.”

Bill Williams, chairman of the Industrial Board, added that the proposal is not necessarily binding and that any additional grants or other means of funding could be added or substituted, referring to the 7-mill property tax.

The jury finally adopted the proposal, which will be forwarded to the state Office of Commerce and Industry for “further enhancement” before being delivered to the industry officials by Gov. Edwin Edwards.

No action was taken on Atterberry’s request for an economic development corporation.

In other business, the jury held a public hearing and reached a compromise over efforts to have the alcoholic beverage permit of a parish lounge revoked.

Acadia Sheriff Ken Goss petitioned for the hearing to consider revoking the permit of Ray Lee’s Supper Club, located on U.S. 90 east of Crowley.

Goss cited a number of “disturbances and violations of law” involving Lee Myers, owner of the club.

According to the compromise suggested by Goss, the club will be allowed to operate through the remainder of the year, providing Meyers agrees not to seek renewal of his license.

Another stipulation is that the license will be immediately revoked if any further disturbances or violations are reported at the lounge.

In other action Tuesday, the jury:
- accepted the low bid of $99,727.50 submitted by Barber Bros. Construction for roadway improvements in Acadian Acres subdivision;
- accepted the proposal of Bill Lyons for maintenance of the Crowley-Rayne Industrial Park at $300 per month, effective Oct. 1; and
- designated the Acadia-Verilion Community Action program, Inc. to receive state funds for fiscal year 1987-88.