Greater Baton Rouge Airport District commissioners approved a 1991 operating budget on Tuesday that projects a 1.7-percent decrease to $4.91 million in spending and a 1.8-percent increase to $5.93 million in revenues compared to 1990 levels.

The airport expects to raise $1.61 million from landing and fuel fees and hangar and cargo building rental; $1.84 million from terminal building rent and concessions; $1.99 million in commissions from car rentals, coin-operated services and parking fees; $252,350 from industrial area building and land leases; and the balance from miscellaneous sources, according to the budget summary.

Expenses are expected to be less in 1991 than 1990 because the airport has reduced its costs for contractual services and supplies, partly due to its cost-control methods and computerized inventory system, said assistant aviation director Anthony J. Marino.

The decreased budget, however, includes approximately $60,000 in merit raises and for salary adjustments - called for in the city-parish's recent salary study - for the airport's 62 employees, Marino said.

It also provides for two additional employees to be hired - a person to coordinate negotiations for property acquisition around the airport and a clerical person, said aviation director Iray Ledoux.

Of the $1.06 million projected surplus in revenues, $372,120 will be placed in the airport's discretionary capital improvement projects fund, Marino said.

The balance of $688,440 will be split into two accounts: 75 percent to the prepaid airline fee account, from which airlines receive delayed credits on landing fees and terminal space rents; and 25 percent to the airline-approved capital improvements account, which is used as the 5-percent local match for federally funded projects, Marino said.

The Federal Aviation Administration provides 90 percent funding for capital improvements projects from a pool of money funded through a tax on airline tickets and on aviation-related items, such as fuel and tires, purchased by the airlines, Marino said.

Under legislation that took effect Jan. 1, the state now contributes 5 percent of airport construction projects using proceeds from a tax collected on aviation fuel sales, he said.

The airport's budget will be submitted for inclusion in the city-parish's 1991 budget and final approval by the Metro Council, Marino said.

In other business, commissioners tabled action on bids to construct a taxiway parallel to its northwest/southeast runway to explore whether a costlier bid for a concrete-surfaced taxiway ultimately would save money in maintenance costs over an asphalt one.

Project engineer James R. Smith of Dawson Engineers had recommended acceptance of the $1.83 million low bid for an asphalt taxiway.

But commissioners questioned whether spending extra money on the $2.09 million alternate bid for a taxiway with a concrete surface over an asphalt base would save money in the future in maintenance and resurfacing costs.

"Asphalt in Louisiana is just not the way to go," said commission chairman Walter Monsour.