Ascension police jury may lay off 20 workers

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DONALDSONVILLE - Twenty Ascension Parish workers could find themselves without a job when the Police Jury meets Thursday to consider a series of budget-balancing recommendations, including layoffs.

The jury's finance committee wants to trim the proposed 1987 general fund budget to eliminate an operating deficit next year that will run as high as $575,000 without drastic cuts in expenditures.

The committee, which consists of all 11 members of the jury, met Tuesday night and tentatively agreed to lay off 20 employees who are paid from either the general fund or road and bridge accounts.

The cuts must be ratified by the Police Jury. If approved, expenses in the proposed general fund budget will be cut about $170,000, and expenses in the road and bridge account will drop by about $160,000, Secretary-Treasurer Gwen LeBlanc said.

The cuts still will leave an operating deficit of $406,000 in the proposed general fund budget, LeBlanc said.

Jurors Tuesday recommended that nine workers paid with general fund revenues and 11 paid from the road and bridge account be laid off.

They include two courthouse janitors, two janitors and a clerk who works for the Council on Aging, two clerical employees involved with the municipal numbering system and two civil defense coordinators.

Cut from the road and bridge account would be four workers in an excavator crew, a backhoe operator and six other workers in the Donaldsonville area, according to LeBlanc.

Jurors plan to trim about $43,000 from the general fund by eliminating funds for flood control and utilities and telephones for the county agent's office.

In addition, the finance committee will recommend that the jury increase its revenues by charging rent for public office space provided by the parish to the Soil Conservation Service and LSU Cooperative Extension Service, LeBlanc said.

The rental payments would total $25,200 annually.

The Police Jury last week agreed to cut nearly $400,000 from the general fund budget by imposing 10 percent budget cuts on all parish agencies and increasing workers' share of the cost of their health and life insurance.

Jurors began slashing the budget following the defeat Nov. 4 of a 5-mill tax proposal that would have raised about $800,000 a year to help the parish compensate for the loss of state and federal revenues.