Acadia Jury makes deep cuts in attempt to balance budget

By STEVE RANDY
Advertiser Correspondent

CROWLEY — After four hours of deliberation, the Acadia Parish Police Jury Tuesday reluctantly approved extensive cuts in services, materials and personnel in an attempt to balance its 1986 budget.

Jurors approved 23.45 percent across the board cuts in programs where such cuts were permissible, that is, in areas where federal funds are not involved.

Despite the cuts in programs, jurors were forced to go even further to bring into balance its budget as mandated by state law.

Eight layoffs, including the firing of six blue collar employees and two from the office staff, were approved.

The week was cut down to 33 hours in an attempt to cut expenditures.

The Jury was looking at a $28,000 deficit in the 1986 budget if it granted all budgetary requests from all departments.

The Jury also was faced with having to pay $72,000 in money owed to law clerks for 1985, but a recent judges ruling dictates the Jury must only pay half, or $36,000.

However, the Jury will have to pay the full amount in 1986, or $72,000.

The parish also was reprimanded from paying money to law clerks for the last quarter of 1984, according to the Judges ruling.

An additional $5,000 will have to be paid for trial jurors and witnesses during the upcoming year, and the Jury will also pay $22,000 for district courts and $30,000 for district attorneys.

It had been rumored that the Jury had $1.3 million in surplus funds, but Jury Secretary-treasurer Joe Arabie said the only extra money is a certificate of deposit in the amount of $25,500.

The Jury’s proposed cuts were to be totalled and figures presented to the Jury by auditor Steve Lambourne today.

The 1986 budget totals $1,323,927.

In other action, Dennis Broussard, an engineer with J. Bryant Fernet and Associates, appeared regarding a required permit facing the South Rayne Water Corporation.

The corporation, made up of about 300 parish residents living south of Rayne in laying water pipes and meters for a consolidated water supply.

The Jury waived the cost of the permit so the project could move ahead with construction, with the understanding final approval of the work would be made by the Jury’s engineers.

In other business, Fr. Paul Metrejean, pastor of St. Michael’s Catholic Church in Crowley who was representing the Crowley Ministerial Alliance, addressed the Jury saying he had 700 signatures from residents in Crowley and Rayne asking the Jury to restate its parishwide bar closing ordinance.

The Jury recently repealed its law that mandated the 2 a.m. closing of rural bars.

Jurors said they did so because some parish municipalities did not adopt identical laws, creating law enforcement problems.