School board eyeing $1.6 million deficit

CROWLEY — If the current trend continues, the Acadia Parish School board could be facing as much as a $1.6 million deficit by the end of the fiscal year, according to a report issued by Superintendent James Griffin during Monday night’s regular board meeting.

Cutbacks in the Minimum Foundation Program plus decreases in sales tax collections and interest rates could put a dark cloud over Acadia’s financial outlook. In a recent legislative meeting, Griffin was told that cuts to the Minimum Foundation Program were right at 15 percent. He told the board, however, that the 15 percent figure might be more like 15 percent.

The Minimum Foundation Program is supposed to fund the state’s educational system, but state cutbacks due to the current economic slump have taken a bite into the program.

Griffin said in order to make up the difference for the state’s cutbacks, local sources will have to be tapped.

“We have 506 teachers in the parish and it costs $4.4 million for salaries,” he offered as an example. “The state provides only $2.6 million, leaving a local cost of about $1.8 million.”

The local costs usually mean sales tax revenues and interest, but since collections are expected to be approximately $450,000 less than previously projected and those in interest up to $75,000 more than projected, those local sources may not be available.

This added to the $60,000 loss in state funding and a $478,000 deficit, could result in the $1.6 million deficit by the end of the fiscal year in June.

A report from Finance Committee Chairman, Grant Link on the current ‘86 budget offered a brighter side.

Link informed the board that budget cuts were pretty much in line with projections, stating that only four months into the new fiscal year, the board had already saved $620,258 in expenditures, as compared to the same time in 1985.

The biggest savings came in maintenance and improvements to sites where current expenditures are $663,153, a cutback of $76,768 over the same period in 1985.

In other action the board paid tribute to four outgoing members with special recognition being paid to Link, board vice president, who resigned after 20 years as a school board member.

“These are the people who have taken care of what needs to be taken care of,” Link, who for the last 20 years served on the Executive and Finance Committee, told the board. “I want to thank the board for all the confidence they have showed by voting me vice president and allowing me to serve on the executive and finance committees.”

“Serving the 20 years on the executive and finance committee was made easier because I worked with a good president and a good staff,” Link added.

President John D. Sittig, a 30-year board member said in recognition of Link, “there’s a lot of Grant Link that will remain in the parish and on this board.”

In an official resolution, the board declared December 15 as “Grant Link Day” in the parish, with plans for the observance to be announced at a later date.

Other members leaving the board include Den...