Wrecker service ordinance approved in Denham Springs

Florida parishes bureau

DENHAM SPRINGS — The Board of Aldermen on Monday gave final approval to an ordinance regulating wrecker service in the city, ending efforts for more than a year by several wrecker services to be placed on a rotating call list.

The issue had caused some controversy and prompted one wrecker service to retain the services of an attorney to get a rotating call list established.

The board also held a public hearing and issued certificates of indebtedness up to $700,000 to finance several projects for the city.

An otherwise routine matter concerning the Denham Springs Volunteer Fire Department sparked nearly a half-hour of heated discussion between Mayor Herbert Hoover and Alderman Roy Hand.

Hoover asked for an ordinance establishing rules and regulations for the fire department and giving the fire chief more authority. Hand, however, asked why the city needed an ordinance for a volunteer fire department when it already had a volunteer department.

Hoover said the volunteer fire department exists without any rules or regulations to govern it.

Mayor pro tem Charles Crowder said the ordinance was designed to establish rules and regulations for the department. “Every organization has to have rules.”

Hand said he wanted to see language in the ordinance that would not infringe on the regular, paid fire department nor reduce the fire department’s manpower.

“You came on this board fighting this and you voted against something to strengthen the fire department your first week on the board,” the mayor told Hand. “I told you your first week we were going to keep both fire departments open.”

“You told me the fire department on Hatchell Lane was not needed,” Hand replied. “These things have a way of creeping in and I just want to see language installed that will protect the department.”

“We need a paid fire department and a supplemental volunteer department,” Alderman Michael Brown said.

“I have 25 months left in office and I’m going to see to it that we continue to have a paid fire department,” said Alderman Jerry Smith.

Hand withdrew his motion after city attorney Tom Jones explained that the ordinance deals with the internal structure of the fire department and Hand’s amendment could cause problems.

The city also received its annual audit for the year ended June 30 from Hannis T. Bourgeois and Co. of Baton Rouge and Denham Springs. The audit commended the city for fiscal responsibility for meeting its budgetary obligations without having to borrow money from its enterprise fund.

The general fund budget ended the year with a $203,490 surplus.