Cajundome Needs More Funding
To Meet Projected Deficits

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The "cans" and "cannot" of Cajundome operations, outlined for the civic center's management board yesterday, still have city officials talking of an additional 2 percent hotel/motel tax, and possibly going to the state for more money.

The City can cover a projected $73,773 deficit on the Cajundome this fiscal year. City Chief Administrative Officer Glenn Weber told the Cajundome-Auditorium Management Board.

But it cannot meet anticipated deficits of $211,028 in 1984-85 and $300,248 in 1985-86 without additional revenues, he said.

Webber also put a list of $6.3 million in "necessary," "highly needed" and "optional" additional Cajundome equipment needs before board members.

Mayor Dud Lastrapes is expected to meet with area legislators and local hotel/motel officials soon to discuss Cajundome needs, he said.

The chief administrative officer presented a thumbnail sketch of projected revenue requirements for the Cajundome at the board's regular monthly meeting.

Those projections - and more ideas on appointment of a Cajundome director, a rate schedule, Cajundome bookings and the Cajundome access road - were put together by Weber and four other city employees appointed by Lastrapes to an in-house committee.

The committee reportedly had input on its report from Atlanta civic center consultant Robert Kent.

Equipment Needs

The additional equipment needs list puts a $1.5 million price tag on nine "necessary" items still unfunded.

Those include such things as a production sound system, Cajun Field parking gates, escalators and some lighting.

The "highly needed" items come in at $311,000, with the "optional" items estimated at $4.9 million.

Weber urged board members to review the list, and add or subtract to it. They generally agreed to it.

City officials plan to go to the state for a funding request "as soon as possible," Weber said.

As presented yesterday, the $6.3 million in needs breaks down to $1.57 million for the City, and $4.72 million for the state.

"Necessary" items alone would cost the City $375,950, and the state, $1.1 million, totals on the list show.

City Community Affairs Director Al Thierry said the City has already budgeted $1.1 million this year for 65 pieces of equipment which are not on Weber's "additional list."

About $1.9 million more is still needed for what the City previously agreed to fund, Thierry said.

On other Cajundome matters, Weber told the board several things should happen in the next few months:

• introduction of an ordinance to the City Council May 15 for creation of a new city department, headed by the Cajundome director. Final adoption is planned May 29;
• deadline for acceptance of national and local applications for a Cajundome director June 19, with appointment on July 4. Kent has reportedly recommended five of the original 40 applicants for the job;
• acceptance of bids on the access road at the end of June, with bond monies available to fund it in mid-summer and project completion planned for 12 months;
• institution of a Cajundome rate schedule, which is already completed;
• settlement of booking dates with the University of Louisiana, and bookings based on approximately 126 event days the first 16 months of operation, with about 24 concert days, 14 circus days, 18 ice show days, eight miscellaneous "family event" days, eight "tractor pulls," a minimum of 15 UL basketball dates and about 29 convention/trade show engagements.

Cajundome architect Neil Nehrbass added that construction of the new civic center is still on schedule.

The Cajundome is set to open at Bertrand Drive and Congress in July 1985.