The Cajundome Commission will ask Lafayette Consolidated Government for an extra $250,000, if needed, to get through the fiscal year that ends Oct. 31.

If approved, this will be the first time in the Cajundome's 23-year history that it receives more than $500,000 a year from city-parish government.

The Cajundome is owned by UL, which pays nothing to operate the arena. City-parish government is required, through an agreement with UL, to pay up to $500,000 a year to operate the Dome. The remainder of the arena's operating costs are covered by self-generated revenues such as concession sales.

Cajundome Director Greg Davis already implemented $656,000 in cuts and revenue-enhancing moves, including eliminating eight full-time and several part-time positions, and increasing the price of sodas and beer. But the Cajundome still was $338,000 over budget a month ago.

Davis said he is more confident this week than a month ago that the worst-case scenario (a $330,000 deficit on top of a budgeted $499,000 deficit) will not occur, and the entire $250,000 will not be needed to cover a budget deficit.

But that's only if events that are penciled in on the calendar...
this year come to fruition. If the city-parish council rejects the request, additional cuts, including further job cuts and pay cuts, will be needed. And the sooner, the better, to reap nine months worth of savings rather than implementing deeper cuts later in the year, Davis said.

The Cajundome is very important to Lafayette, City-Parish President Joey Durel said. But before encouraging the council to OK an additional $250,000, Durel said he needs to know more about the subsidy agreement, which expires in 2012.

If the agreement is going to be amended to exceed the subsidy cap, it may be time to amend other parts of the agreement, too, Durel said.

The Cajundome has received the same amount of money, no more than $500,000 a year, for 23 years "and nobody is operating with the same amount of money" as they did 23 years ago, Durel said.

By the numbers

Lafayette Consolidated Government subsidy by the numbers

- $7 million - total subsidy to Cajundome from LCG, 1986-2008.
- $305,803 - average annual subsidy over 23 years.
- 8.47 percent - percentage of LCG General Fund the $500,000 subsidy represented in 1987.
- .62 percent - percentage of LCG General Fund the $500,000 subsidy represented in 2008.

SOURCE: Cajundome

$1.5 million Cajundome deficit by the numbers

- $374,000 - increase in property insurance
- $400,000 - reduction in concerts, from 11 to seven
- $200,000 - sales taxes absorbed by Cajundome
- $150,000 - loss of football, baseball food service contract
- $100,000 - loss of LA-based production crew
- $100,000 - reduction in concert charges
- $100,000 - minimum wage increase
- $75,000 - increased food costs
- $18,000 - increased health insurance

SOURCE: Cajundome