Cajundome panel extends RLS contract

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Staff Writer

The new Joint Cajundome Commission closed its first meeting Friday with plans to study what's best in a permanent management contract for the Dome — but not without first extending an interim contract.

Recreation and Leisure Services will now serve as manager at least until Dec. 1, it was decided at the Commission's mostly organizational meeting.

Without the extension, the company's contract would have expired Oct. 31.

Commission members agreed they haven't enough time between now and month's end to issue requests for other proposals and make a management decision.

In fact, they broached the possibility of allowing additional monthly extensions for RLS after December.

But they also vowed to immediately begin a study of whether private or in-house management would better suit Dome needs.

Newly-elected Commission chairman Bill Rucks III gave members Glenn Weber and Mario Mamalakis the job of evaluating private management and commissioners James Caillier and Dr. Ken Brown the task of looking at in-house arrangements.

Each pair is to look at facilities with comparable set-ups, evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of those and report back on their findings, Rucks explained.

He gave no timetable for the work, except to say he expects "some discussion" at the Commission's next meeting, probably later this month.

Weber suggested that RLS also be asked to give a "plan of action" for how it will continue to operate on an interim basis after Oct. 31.

The company's separate food and beverage contract with the Dome, which still has about four years to run, will not be immediately affected.

RLS president Ken Young gave commissioners an update of finances and of entertainment events scheduled at the Dome through early November.

He said this year's Cajundome deficit, now at nearly $465,000, will probably be $500,000 to $550,000 at the Oct. 31 close of the fiscal year, but lower next year because of cutbacks.

A reduction of employees from 20 as of last Nov. 1 to 13 now should mean a 1987-88 savings of about $18,000 for each one no longer on board, Young said, for instance.

Caillier and Mamalakis also wanted it known that a more than $500,000 deficit is offset by a City subsidy to the Dome and more.

DOME

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While other members agreed with the intent, some said they think the matter ought to first be referred to the Commission's attorney.

Commissioners agreed in other business to retain the firm of Voorhies and Labbe (the City's counsel) as their counsel, to appoint George Lewis their auditor and to elect Brown their vice chairman.

Appointments to Commission committees on finance, physical plant, personnel, auditorium liaison, events and insurance are to be made by Rucks next week.

Also still to be announced is the Commission's regular meeting schedule, which members agreed should initially include a session every other week.