

Coliseum Authority members bicker

By Johnny Edwards | Staff Writer
Saturday, May 24, 2008

Nose to nose and shouting threats and profanities, two Augusta Coliseum Authority members seemed on the verge of fisticuffs during a closed meeting Friday.

Richard Isdell told Willie Law that members like him are causing all the trouble with the authority and that "I'll bring you down!"

Mr. Isdell called him a profane slang for excrement. Mr. Law said that, no, he's the profane slang for excrement.

Afterward, the two shook hands and told each other it was nothing personal. The men also apologized to those who witnessed the spat.

"That's never happened before," Mr. Law said. "I've got nothing against Richard."

Mr. Isdell said he has nothing against Mr. Law, but he doesn't like what he stands for. Both men said they couldn't remember exactly what started the altercation, but their ensuing, less-belligerent debate involved the firing of Facilities Manager Julie Huggins in March, with Mr. Isdell blaming Mr. Law for kicking out an asset to the authority.

The ruckus happened after a meeting of the authority's management search committee, where bids by companies vying to operate James Brown Arena and Bell Auditorium were opened. The meeting adjourned, then Mr. Isdell, the committee chairman, asked an Augusta Chronicle reporter to leave so members could talk in private. Freddie Sanders, an attorney, said they could do so because they didn't have a quorum.

When the reporter questioned the legality of the move, the members left the meeting room and assembled in a conference room. The reporter went to the room to protest further and found Mr. Isdell and Mr. Law facing off at the head of the table.

As for the management bids, the committee rejected one of the five submitted outright because it was an individual applying for the general manager's job. Mr. Isdell said committee members will meet again in about a week.

"Hopefully, we'll narrow it down to two names," he said.

HUGGINS VS. LAW

Fired Facilities Manager Julie Huggins filed a lawsuit Friday accusing Coliseum Authority member Willie Law of libel, slander and costing her her job when he publicly accused her of lying on her resume.

In March, Ms. Huggins was let go by a 6-5 vote, one week after starting work. Before the vote, Mr. Law said she falsely stated she was the non-fraternal director of operations at the Morroco Shrine Auditorium in Jacksonville, Fla., when her title was actually rental manager. In a letter to the authority, the chairman of the Shrine board said Ms. Huggins functioned as operations director.

Ms. Huggins is demanding an unspecified sum for damages, punitive damages and attorney fees.

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From the Saturday, May 23, 2008 edition of the Augusta Chronicle