

Cobo panel vows to move forward

BY NAOMI R. PATTON • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • MARCH 19, 2009

Members of the new regional authority appointed to oversee Cobo Center met for more than two hours today, declaring they would move forward with plans to manage the convention center even as questions about the group's legality remain unresolved.

“Everybody’s willing to do their part to do whatever they can to make this a smooth transition,” said Larry Alexander, president and CEO of the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau, elected as chair of the authority this morning.

But the five-member Detroit Convention Facility Authority, with one representative each from Detroit, the counties of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb and the state of Michigan, stopped short of implementing a plan to request proposals for a management company to take over running Cobo or for permanent legal representation.

Attorneys from Miller Canfield have been retained by Wayne County to work for the authority during a 90-day transitional period.

If the authority survives a legal challenge by the Detroit City Council, it would assume control of Cobo on April 20. Under the state legislation passed in December, the authority will meet within 30 days of being appointed for an organizational meeting, electing officers and enacting its own rules.

“What we saw today is a board that’s going to work in the best interest of Detroit,” said Anthony Neely, Detroit Mayor Ken Cockrel, Jr.’s deputy press secretary. “It’s all about [jobs](#). It’s not about politics.”