

Cobo board to meet today

Management company plan sparks discord

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The new regional authority appointed to oversee Cobo Center will meet for the first time at 8 a.m. today, even as questions about its legality remain unresolved.

javascript:void(0);If the authority survives a legal challenge by the Detroit City Council, it would assume control of Cobo on April 20. The authority is comprised of one representative each from Detroit, the counties of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb and the state of Michigan.

Under state legislation passed in December, the authority is to meet within 30 days of being appointed for an organizational meeting, electing officers and enacting its own rules.

Today, the authority is to consider a plan to request proposals for a management company to take over running the convention center.

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano said the plan is a starting point for discussion. But Oakland County officials raised concerns about how quickly -- within about a month -- the plan [calls](#) for hiring a management company.

That plan "is carved out to support the firm that they want selected," Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson said, referencing Wayne County. "But that's just the old way of doing business."

But all five members of the authority have individual veto power over any action or contract the authority considers.

"At this point, we have to learn to work together instead of throwing up roadblocks," Ficano said.

The Detroit council voted last month to reject transferring Cobo to the regional authority.

Detroit Mayor Ken Cockrel Jr. vetoed that action, and the council has sued, asking a judge to throw out the veto. Wayne County Circuit Judge Isidore Torres has set a March 26 hearing.

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