

NOBLE Executive Board Meeting via zoom

January 10, 2024

Present: Kathy Lussier, Brian Courtemanche, Catherine McDonald, Allison Babin, Theresa Hurley, Amy Lannon, Tara Mansfield, and Myron Schirer-Suter.

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Brian Courtemanche called the Meeting to order at 2:06pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Catherine made the motion to approve the minutes from 11/8/2023, seconded by Theresa. All in favor.

3. Treasurer's Report

The budget report was distributed. Myron noted there was nothing out of the ordinary.

4. Executive Director's Report

Upgrade to 3.10

Kathy reported that the Evergreen upgrade to 3.10 went well. MOBIUS completed the upgrade in the estimated timeframe, which was impressive given that the upgrade jumped two Evergreen releases and included an upgrade of the database software and the operating system. Kathy noted that NOBLE staff were able to resolve critical issues by early Monday afternoon, the most problematic being the patron login error. Other issues are being addressed as they come up. Kathy noted that credit for the fairly smooth upgrade goes to NOBLE staff, who put the new software through its paces to try to identify and fix problems, and also to library staff who identified issues on the training system.

Kathy reported that NOBLE is beginning to prepare for the next upgrade in June. They hope to skip one release and upgrade to 3.12, which was released in December. Kathy noted that the 3.10 release is already at a point where it is only receiving security updates, and NOBLE wants to be on a release that benefits from ongoing bug fixes. NOBLE plans to return to the twice yearly upgrade schedule from here on out.

Work with Jane Sandberg

Kathy reported that Evergreen Community developer Jane Sandberg completed her series of trainings with NOBLE staff on Angular coding. Angular is the framework used for the Evergreen staff client. NOBLE staff members learned a lot and now feel more comfortable modifying and adding code to the client. Kathy noted that Michele has contributed several bug fixes to the community as a result of these sessions.

Kathy reported that she reached out to Jane to discuss project requirements and pricing to update the library selector in the new staff catalog. NOBLE would like to return the copy location groups to the selector and will honor the visibility settings that are used in the public catalog so that there will not be redundant options in the selector. Kathy noted that working with Jane will likely result in the project being done more quickly and at a smaller expense than hiring a larger vendor.

SMS Notification Service Investigation

Kathy reported that after receiving quotes from two hosted SMS notifications services, NOBLE is looking into services that offer tighter integration with Evergreen. There were concerns about the quotes received from Shoutbomb and MessageBee, and both required Evergreen to send a file of patrons who need to receive notices on a regular schedule. Kathy noted that this method would work for notifications, but would not support the Call Number texting feature, which requires immediate action. NOBLE reached out to Upside Wireless, which works via an API method that allows text messages to be sent immediately. Martha is also looking into another service called Flowroute, which is used by another Evergreen library that has shared the code. By working with the same vendor, NOBLE may be able to build some of the functionality available from other hosted service providers.

Value of NOBLE

Kathy reported that she has been working on getting the Value of NOBLE out to member libraries and plans to send it to libraries by next week at the latest.

NOBLE Advocacy Committee

Kathy reported that the NOBLE Advocacy Committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow. She noted that there were no volunteers to host a legislative event in the North Shore area. The committee will need a new liaison from the Executive Board to replace Cate Merlin.

Collection Management Working Group

Kathy reported that the Collection Management Working Group met on December 12th and is working on revamping the regular collection assessment reports that NOBLE previously generated for libraries. Subcommittees will be formed to work on the following tasks: finding a better way to break down library collections, generating test reports to see where tweaks should be made, identifying “Best of…” lists that can be compared against the NOBLE collection, and providing guidance on which formats should have reports generated.

Evergreen Community

The Evergreen Community issued release 3.12 in December and Michele Morgan was part of the release team. Kathy reported the Evergreen Community is discussing plans to return to regular bug-fix releases in between the major releases and is launching its strategic planning process. Kathy reported that she facilitated a Zoom community conversation to collect community feedback and that another session is scheduled for next week. She noted that a stakeholders online retreat is scheduled for February.

Massachusetts Community

Kathy reported that in her role on the MLA Legislative Committee, she has been working on two upcoming legislative briefings at the State House. There will be a briefing on the bill for reasonable ebook licensing terms on January 23 and a briefing on one of the Freedom to Read bills on January 31. Another briefing will be scheduled to discuss the legislative agenda and will replace Library Legislative Day at the State House. Kathy noted that a briefing will also be scheduled for the Freedom to Read bill in school libraries

5. Potential NOBLE Proposal to host Evergreen Development Initiative

Kathy reported that PaILS has withdrawn their offer of serving as a fiscal agent for the cooperative. As a result, NOBLE is likely to host the project. Kathy noted she will write a proposal so that everyone is clear on what services NOBLE will be providing and the projected costs and will present it at the Executive Board meeting next month.

Kathy reported that she has been working with the Executive Director at PaILS to create an RFP for a strategic planning process for ECDI. The group decided Monday to hold off on this process until the Evergreen community proceeds further in its process. The current ECDI Coordinator has offered to continue in her role as a consultant when she leaves Evergreen Indiana to help NOBLE through the transition. Kathy noted that she is no longer leaning towards hiring an out of state employee.

Kathy noted that Paula can begin working on setting up Quickbooks to handle accounting for this project since ECDI’s bank account will be in NOBLE’s name. An update to the NOBLE bylaws will be required to allow for a different authorized signer on that account. Kathy asked how the Board would feel about the possibility of giving authority to the NOBLE Executive Director to sign these checks with approval from someone from ECDI governance. Brian noted he was comfortable with it as long as there is transparency. Myron asked how it would work with the ECDI approval. Kathy said she thought there would be an ECDI Treasurer and they would use an online approval process like bill.com offers. Myron noted that the ECDI approver may not be local so the online option was a good idea. Catherine asked where the ECDI money comes from. Kathy said ECDI is not

incorporated so a fiscal agent is required. Catherine asked if there could be a scenario where a NOBLE Executive Officer would need to be involved. Kathy said they do not want an Executive Board Officer involved. Because NOBLE is the fiscal agent, the banking is done in NOBLE's name and the bylaws apply even though the banking is for ECDI. Brian, Myron, or Catherine would need to sign the checks if the bylaws are not updated. Kathy noted that the cosigner could also be someone local, for example in CWMars. Catherine noted that NOBLE Executive Director would specifically be allowed to sign checks for ECDI in the bylaws. Amy asked if someone would be running regular reports. Kathy said Paula would be running reports and sharing them with ECDI governance. Amy noted the arrangement is not unusual.

6. Semi-Annual Evaluation for NOBLE Executive Director

A packet with the goal based performance evaluation form was distributed. Brian reported that the Executive Board had approved the goals at the August meeting. He noted that the Officers met with Kathy in December and that the body agreed they were very pleased and that there is great progress so far. As of December, Kathy has met with half of the directors in NOBLE and will conclude the visits by the end of the year. Brian noted that January is a busy month with the Welcome to NOBLE session, evaluating NOBLE staffing needs, and NOBLE's strategic planning. Brian noted that he can share the name of the strategic planner that Endicott uses. A new goal based appraisal has been introduced. Kathy noted that everyone is getting used to it. Brian noted there was much more in the packet and said he was very pleased. Catherine said she was mostly concerned with burnout with all of the exciting initiatives. She noted that the communication is excellent and that Kathy is so self-aware and did so much work on the appraisal. She noted that she appreciated all of Kathy's work. Brian agreed and noted things are moving speedily. Kathy noted her energy is fine, although MLA has been a little overwhelming. She noted that she put it in her self-evaluation to help her with saying no to things. She noted that her concern is not her energy, but the time it takes away from her work at NOBLE. Allison noted that it is incredible how much Kathy has taken on and that it has been a seamless transition. She noted that we are lucky to have her in that role. Brian noted that Kathy should be candid about her concerns and share them with the Executive Board. Kathy noted the Board has been very supportive.

7. NOBLE Strategic Planning Process

A draft RFP was distributed. Kathy reported that NOBLE is due for its next strategic planning process. She would like the FY26-31 plan to be completed by June 30th to provide some guidance for the FY26 action plan. Kathy noted that the Executive Director is heavily involved in the strategic planning and wanted to know how much involvement the Executive Board would like to have. Myron asked Kathy for her preference. Kathy noted she does not have a preference. She noted that when she did strategic planning at SAILS there were subcommittees, but she could see the whole Executive Board, but she would also be comfortable working with NOBLE staff if the Board wanted to step back. Amy noted that Executive Board members would have the opportunity to be part of focus groups or meetings to participate in the process, along with NOBLE Members. Amy noted that the Executive Board also has to approve the plan, but does not know the organization as well as the NOBLE staff does. She noted that Reading is undergoing strategic planning and it is easier for the director to do the work than the Board. Allison agreed and noted that the Executive Board does not need to be involved in the selection of the strategic planning consultant, but can be involved along the way. Catherine agreed and noted that having the Board involved is too many cooks in the kitchen and that the work is best left to the people who manage the organization. Myron agreed.

8. Vacancy on NOBLE Executive Board

Brian reported that Cate Merlin has moved to the MBLC so there is a vacancy on the Executive Board. He noted that some names have come up including Kevin from Everett, Abby from Lynnfield, and Jenny from Gloucester. Myron noted that the process is being appointed. Amy noted that she has no objections, but noted that Jenny may be too busy due to the building project. Kathy noted that Abby is going for funding for a renovation. Catherine noted that institutional knowledge is helpful. Allison asked if Alan had been on the Board before. Brian and Kathy confirmed he had been. Amy noted that having Everett on the Board would bring another library with a branch serving a large community, similar to Peabody. Amy noted that everyone except Officers are appointed every year so the appointment would be through June 30th. Kathy noted now that the

meetings are on Zoom, it is not required to travel to NOBLE headquarters. Theresa asked if it would be helpful to send an email to directors gauging interest in serving. Catherine said it was a great idea. Brian agreed and will send out the email.

9. Exploration into e-rate program

Kathy reported that NOBLE held an e-rate session for libraries on November 29 and requested feedback from public library directors to gauge interest in e-rate before committing staff resources to this project. Only five libraries responded, which indicates there aren't many strong positive or negative feelings about the program. Three directors said they were somewhat interested in NOBLE pursuing the program, but had strong concerns about using the software. One director said they were definitely interested in NOBLE pursuing the program. Only one director said they had no interest, but this response came from the only survey respondent who did not watch the e-rate session. Most respondents were concerned about the software overblocking or underblocking sites, and everyone was concerned about staff time and expertise. There were also concerns about the administrative overhead to participation.

Catherine reported that she and the assistant director have been attending the sessions and that they understand the savings, but do not understand the costs of the program. She noted that initially filtering was their initial concern, but that seems more manageable now. She noted that the reporting and the staff time involved is the biggest concern now. Kathy noted a lot of people in SAILS complained about the reporting and that it was similar to taxes. She noted that CLAMS and MVLC hired consultants to do the administrative work. She noted that the cost must be less than the savings to make it work. Kathy noted that she would like to do the investigation while MBLC has the consultant on board. Allison asked if it would be worth contacting the libraries that did not answer and ask them to fill out the survey. Kathy said she could do that. Catherine noted she did not think she responded. Theresa noted she thinks she did not respond either. Tara noted that she would like to see a demo of the filtering. Allison noted that biggest concern for her is the administrative tasks and she is excited about the filtering because the staff does that now and has to intervene with people watching pornography. Amy noted that technology has advanced quite a bit in 20 years, including AI so filtering is likely much better. She noted the administrative part was most concerning and asked if it would be libraries or NOBLE doing the work. Kathy noted that she would like the work to be done by NOBLE. She noted it would be saving on the current lines and it could help managed wireless costs. Amy noted that this will be a process that has to go through Membership and will require education. She noted that the challenges and censorship happening elsewhere makes filtering feel strange. Catherine noted that she thought that the filter could be disabled upon request. Kathy confirmed that libraries are required to remove the filter if asked. Catherine noted it would be helpful to know the deadlines for the reporting with all the other structured reporting timelines. Amy asked if an educational session would be helpful and Kathy noted that was what the session Alec hosted was. Kathy noted that the discussion indicates that further exploration on certain points is warranted.

10. New Business

Kathy thanked Theresa because the City of Lynn is covering the translation for all but three languages for the new eCard service. Kathy noted that stipend money is available for this purpose.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tara Mansfield
Secretary