

NOBLE Executive Board Meeting hybrid

April 10, 2024

Present: Kathy Lussier, Brian Courtemanche, Catherine McDonald, Allison Babin, Linda Gardener, Amy Lannon, Tara Mansfield, Jonathan Nichols, Myron Schirer-Suter.

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Brian Courtemanche called the Meeting to order at 2:12pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Myron made the motion to approve the minutes from 3/13/2024, seconded by Jonathan. All in favor.

3. Treasurer's Report

The FY24 Budget Report was distributed. Myron reported that everything looked good.

4. Resource Sharing Working Group

Kathy reported that the Resource Sharing Working Group had been working since the fall on sharing collections. Collections that may be exempted include: Library of Things, hotspots, academic campus, video games, rentals, summer reading, and community read titles. Kathy noted that the lending rules are not marked clearly in the catalog, so NOBLE is working on that.

Kathy reported that the group is looking into the changes with patron messages since the upgrade, and will recommend wording changes to the Network Transfer policy.

5. Collection Development Working Group

Amy reported that she was unable to attend. Kathy reported that the group was still working on the collection analysis reports. Martha had figured out how to fix the reports and test reports were run in four distinct areas. The group will review the reports. Kathy noted that they were very appreciative of Martha's efforts. Linda noted that she was very excited and that she loved those reports.

6. Advocacy Committee Report

Brian reported that the Legislative Breakfast took place on March 22nd at Endicott College. He noted that the Advocacy Committee did a great job putting the event together, and that about 40 people attended. Public library patrons spoke about what the library meant to them and MBLC's Karen Traub gave a nice speech. Brian noted that some Reps spoke, but most sent Aides.

Myron noted that Brian was a gracious host. Kathy reported that the next steps were to identify a library to host next year now. She noted that Rob Favini mentioned the patron from the Legislative Breakfast at the MBLC meeting, and thanked Allison for suggesting him. Allison noted that Brian did a great job speaking. Brian noted that it was spring break, so there was lots of parking, but no students or faculty around.

7. Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee Report

Kathy reported that the committee was working with the consultants to get a survey out to membership. The next step is focus groups.

8. Nominating Committee Report

Brian reported that the Nominating Committee is a dynamic duo with Allison. Kathy said that Brian was going to put out an email to the directors email list to see if there was any interest in either of the two positions. Brian noted that he will get together with Allison soon.

9. Exploratory Committee to Examine Public Library Bid Process Report

Tara reported that the committee was scheduled to meet for the first time on Thursday.

10. Executive Director's Report

Evergreen development

Kathy reported that Jane Sandberg completed the first piece of her work on the library selector in the new staff catalog, and posted it last night. It has been loaded on the test system and Michele is looking at it and testing it now. Kathy noted that the selector is a new feature that was not available before that includes shelving location groups.

Kathy noted that NOBLE still has about \$5,500 to go towards other potential development projects. She had been planning to put funding towards fixes with credit card processing that resulted in duplicate charges, but a community developer named Ken Cox stepped up to perform the necessary coding to get those charges fixed. Michele helped test the coding and gave feedback and the coding is now in production.

Kathy reported that the remaining funding will likely go towards a CW MARS-sponsored project to fix bugs in item templates and add some improvements in the way they are handled in Evergreen. The problems with item templates have been the second biggest issue since the January upgrade. The quote to do the work came in much higher than expected, and CW MARS will need development partners before they can move forward.

Kathy reported that NOBLE is appreciative of the work done by several community developers, including Jason Stephenson of CW MARS, to provide a more secure method to use FTP with Ingram. The vendor is requiring that this method be used for all order communication on April 15, and the work was completed just in time to meet this deadline. Kathy noted that Lynnfield is testing it for NOBLE right now.

e-Renew

Kathy reported that Martha has the e-Renew code loaded on a test system and is making progress on getting it ready for implementation. Kathy noted that Equinox is doing some work to get this feature baked into Evergreen, but it won't be ready for some time.

EZProxy

Kathy reported that NOBLE received a quote from OCLC for the hosted version, but it is still very high for the public libraries, which get limited use from the product. NOBLE will keep looking at this to see if there is a way the service can be provided in a cost effective way without hosting it at NOBLE.

Preparing for Marblehead and Melrose Moves

Kathy reported that she, Martha, and Paula have been working with Magna5 over the past month to get quotes and plans in place for the upcoming moves in Marblehead and Melrose. The account executive they were working with left a few months ago, and the transition to a new account rep has been rocky. Kathy noted that she is hopeful the relationship stabilizes once the new account rep becomes familiar with NOBLE's setup.

Essex County Community Foundation Digital Equity Coalition

Kathy reported that she attended the quarterly meeting of the ECCF Digital Equity Coalition last week. The Massachusetts Broadband Initiative announced that the state's Digital Equity Plan was accepted and has resulted in a \$14 million grant. They also discussed the process for expending a \$147 million Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) grant. The priority for this grant is to provide high-speed internet access to areas that are unserved or underserved, and there are 15,000 locations in Massachusetts that fit this definition. Once that priority is addressed, the remaining funding will be used to boost bandwidth at community anchor institutions, which includes libraries. MBI's goal is for all community anchor institutions to offer 1 GB in bandwidth. Kathy noted that only NOBLE's larger libraries meet this goal.

Kathy reported that the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute noted that the Affordable Connectivity Program is ending and they are relying on community partners to spread the word. Program recipients received a discount on their internet bills, and the prices are expected to increase in April or May if the customer does not affirmatively opt out of the service.

Kathy reported that ECCF is also planning to offer Collaborative Partnership grants in the fall. Kathy is looking into whether there are grants for NOBLE or libraries.

Evergreen Community

Kathy reported that NOBLE has offered to host the upcoming developer hack-a-way next fall. Hosting the hack-a-way will allow more NOBLE staff to attend the event, and will save on travel costs. However, there are some expenses involved, including the costs of breakfast and lunch for the attendees. Kathy noted that she is looking into the cost of hosting it at Endicott College instead of NOBLE, with the participants lodging at the nearby Wylie Inn. Kathy talked with CW Mars and they are looking into the possibility of co-sponsorship.

11. Vote to Affirm Email Vote to Endorse Joint Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

Motion: Move to affirm the email vote to endorse the Joint Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Censorship.

No discussion.

Action: Linda made the motion, seconded by Catherine. All in favor.

12. Vote to Designate Executive Director as authorized signer on ECDI account

Motion: Move to designate Executive Director as authorized signer on ECDI account.

Discussion:

Kathy reported that the transition to host ECDI was underway and that agreements had been sent to the attorney to have the funds transferred. The goal is to have most of the funds transferred by the end of April, but some money will be left in Indiana's account for the current coordinator until June 30th.

Kathy noted that initially she was going to recommend a bylaws update to allow for this provision, but the bylaws allow for the Executive Board to authorize additional signers:

Except as the Executive Board may generally or in particular cases authorize the execution thereof in some other manner, all deeds, leases, transfers, contracts, bonds, notes, checks, drafts, and other obligations made, accepted or endorsed by the Corporation shall be signed by the President or by the Treasurer.

Kathy reported that NOBLE's attorney thought it would be preferable that the change be authorized through an Executive Board vote. Amy asked if the motion should include the Treasurer. Kathy said the bylaws already authorize the Treasurer to sign. Myron asked if there will be a requirement for two signers at a certain amount. Kathy noted that when ECDI has a governance, they will figure that out.

Kathy noted that most of the ECDI bill payments will occur through Ramp.com, which allows remote approval processes. Ramp will then issue payment for any invoices. To support this process, Kathy recommends that the Executive Director be authorized to sign checks from this bank account, but not for any other bank account belonging to NOBLE. She noted that it's a good idea to have a second person on the account, such as the NOBLE Treasurer, even though it is not anticipated that the treasurer will need to sign any checks.

Action: Amy made the motion, seconded by Allison. All in favor.

13. IPEDS Change

Myron reported that the Department of Education is proposing removing the Academic Libraries Survey from the IPEDS, which gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution in the US that participates in the federal student financial aid programs. He gave a brief history of the changes to the programs over the years. For libraries, IPEDS collects information on collections, services, and expenditures at libraries at degree-granting institutions. The data is freely available and libraries use the data collected via

the survey to budget, plan, compare, and learn from other institutions. The data is available at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>.

Here is announcement about the call for comments:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/04/2024-04509/agency-information-collection-activities-comment-request-integrated-postsecondary-education-data>

Myron is asking NOBLE libraries to respond to the public comment. Brian noted that Endicott College completes the ACRL and the IPEDS survey each year, and that has not been approached to give a public comment. Linda noted that it sounds like an institutional survey that is saying that library data isn't important. Kathy noted that it sounds like ACRL is optional and IPEDS is required. Linda noted that if you are collecting all the information for one report and moving it over to another report when it's required, they may not do it if it's not required. Myron noted that IPEDS will continue to exist, but it would not have library data. Brian proposed drafting a statement. Catherine asked Myron if the online form has specific questions. Myron said the survey has specific questions about data. Catherine clarified that she meant the public comment form, and was wondering if there were specific questions to respond to. Myron noted that there are directed questions. Catherine suggested looking at the questions to develop a strategy for the statement. She noted that not taking libraries seriously is in our wheelhouse, but she is not sure if that is what they are asking. Myron noted that you can say whatever you want in the public comment, but there are some directed questions. Brian suggested forming an ad-hoc subcommittee to review the questions. Myron noted the deadline is May 3rd. Brian proposed that Myron be on the subcommittee, and then they will reach out to Merrimack, Salem State, and Bunker Hill. Myron noted that public library representation is also welcome. Linda asked if they would want to offer the opportunity to Montserrat. Brian thanked Linda and noted he will reach out to all of the academics tomorrow. Kathy noted that NOBLE uses IPED data for a variety of things. Catherine noted this topic has its own Reddit thread.

14. NOBLE Vision Insurance Proposal

Motion: Move to add the Sun Life Group Vision Plan 3 to the NOBLE benefits package as an employer-funded benefit.

Discussion:

The Sun Life Proposal and Vision Plan Annual Cost document were distributed. Kathy reported that Paula requested a vision insurance quote from NOBLE's benefits broker while looking into the health insurance options. NOBLE has the option to offer this plan on a voluntary basis to employees, who then pay the cost of the insurance premiums, or it could offer it as an employer-paid benefit.

Kathy noted that the cost is reasonable, and she recommends that NOBLE offer it on a voluntary or employer-paid basis since it provides savings for any employee who participates and replaces their eyewear every year. Kathy noted that due to the cost savings of switching to a different health insurance plan, NOBLE has funds in the budget to cover it as an employer-paid benefit. The annual plan cost for all employees is a little more than \$1,000. NOBLE will see \$1,500 to \$4,500 in savings under the new health insurance plan. Kathy noted that CW Mars offers the plan on a voluntary basis. Linda noted that if the costs will be relatively stable and with the health insurance realized savings, it is not a big financial burden. She noted that adding benefits is important for employers to be competitive. Kathy noted that NOBLE will be posting a position in the near future. Brian agreed with Linda. Allison noted she also supports the employer funded benefit.

Action: Allison made the motion, seconded by Jonathan. All in favor.

15. MOBIUS / Unique Proposal for MessageBee SMS

Motion: Move that NOBLE should implement the MessageBee SMS service under the pricing offered through MOBIUS.

Discussion:

Kathy reported that MOBIUS has received pricing from Unique to provide a text messaging service to NOBLE patrons. All of the costs outlined in the proposal are significantly lower than the pricing NOBLE received directly from Unique.

There is a \$995 one-time implementation fee and a \$540 annual fee. The price per text will range from \$0.009 to \$0.019. Under NOBLE's earlier proposal from Unique, the annual maintenance fee was \$1,495 and the per-text price was \$.03

If NOBLE continues to only offer texting for hold notices, Kathy estimates the total annual cost would be \$2,350. If overdue notices by text were added, the cost is estimated to be about \$3,000. If NOBLE wanted to implement the service this fiscal year, the available funds from the salary budget line could be used to fund the implementation fee, annual fee, and first few months of text messaging. Kathy noted that courtesy notices make her nervous because there are so many sent out, so those notices will not be included at this time.

Kathy reported that the text call number feature would not be available with the new service. Linda asked if there were any statistics on the text to call number usage. Myron noted that patrons often don't know what it means and think they will get the item, so the statistics may not be useful. He noted that when the text to call number feature was implemented, most libraries had a catalog in the lobby so it was convenient to get the text. Now that everyone has a smartphone, they can look at the catalog anywhere. Linda noted that patrons can use the app. Kathy noted that patrons can take a picture of the screen. Allison noted that she is glad to see it go because she's never seen it do anything but cause confusion. Myron asked if that was because people don't realize what it does. Allison reported that patrons think they are texting themselves the book. She noted that we are past needing a feature like that. Catherine noted that she uses it a lot, and that is most likely because it is an option that is there. She noted she could easily do the same thing with a browser and she doesn't think it will be missed. Myron noted that Gordon got rid of their catalog computers. Allison noted that the option creates visual clutter in the catalog, and that it will look cleaner without it. Kathy noted that she and Elizabeth had the same discussion.

Action: Allison made the motion, seconded by Myron. All in favor.

16. New Business

Allison reported that the Beverly Library's HVAC project did not pass. Brian asked if that means that the library will have to close if it gets really hot in the summer. Allison noted that the Mayor had wanted the library to be the official warming and cooling center, and had been resistant to the library closing when the building's interior temperatures were extreme. Allison noted that she believed that he will be less resistant to closing since the HVAC issues are unresolved. Brian noted that if it's too hot in the building, it could be legally advisable to close. Allison noted that Beverly does not have anything like that. Jonathan noted that Allison may find herself subject to a grievance from the union. Allison confirmed that she has been. Jonathan noted that he had been talking with Kimberly from Marblehead and she had received a grievance because the temporary space was too cold. Allison noted that there was a day a couple of winters ago when it was only 54 degrees in the building, and she was not allowed to close the building. She noted that the grievance is still pending. Brian noted that Endicott teachers have a union, but Endicott staff and administration are not union. He noted that the library part of the building is small, and there are not a lot of places to put people. He noted that it gets to be 80 in some areas due to the failing HVAC system on the roof. An employee noted on their performance review that they were unable to complete their duties due to being overheated all the time. Brian noted that building issues can creep into other areas. Allison agreed, and noted that they still need an HVAC system. Catherine noted that more libraries will face this as more are designated as heating and cooling centers. If the public is relying on the library to be the center, then it becomes the town's responsibility to make sure the buildings can heat and cool. She noted that HVAC systems are very expensive and retrofitting old buildings brings additional challenges. Catherine noted that Linda will have a new building and won't have to worry about this. Linda noted that there

was a waterfall in the Children's Room last week. Kathy noted that she's heard of many new libraries having HVAC issues. Brian noted it is only going to get hotter and hotter with global warming. Brian noted that even if the Beverly Library gets really hot, it has the coolest director around. Myron noted that there have been issues in the Sohler Room since he has been on the Board. Allison noted that since the 1993 renovation, there have been issues with ice and snow build up over the accessible entrance. The entrance has to be closed several times a year, and the proposed HVAC system had a built-in fix for the problem and other deferred maintenance issues. Brian asked if there are ADA accessibility rules that could help. Allison noted that the cost of the proposed project triggered the requirement for ADA upgrades.

Jonathan reported that there was an announcement made at the Swampscott Select Board meeting that the consulting firm hired to evaluate the newly acquired Hawthorne property recommended building a new library at the location. A graphic with a price tag was presented, causing the library to be immediately inundated with calls and emails. Jonathan noted that the project would not happen soon, or even in the next ten years, if it happens at all. The earliest they can begin to apply for funding is 2028.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tara Mansfield