NOBLE
MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION MEETING
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 22, 2022

PRESENT: Eighteen libraries were present at the meeting with authorized voting representatives.

1. CALL TO ORDER: President Amy Lannon called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Motion: Noelle Boc moved to approve the May 19, 2022 Minutes. Second: Abby Porter. Motion carries.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT:
Myron Schirer-Suter's microphone was not working and questions about the distributed FY23 budget report can be sent to Myron or Ron.

4. MANAGERS' REPORT:
Ron Gagnon
Audit
NOBLE's FY22 audit is underway with auditor Bob Guimond. He has been collecting information from Paula, NOBLE's Administrative Assistant, banks, and investment firms. His first day of onsite work was Tuesday and there will be more information to come.

Evergreen Annual Conference
The Evergreen Annual Conference was held online in mid-June. Two NOBLE staff members did presentations. Technical Support Analyst Michele Morgan presented a pre-conference on information sources about Evergreen and the Evergreen community, and Member Services Manager Elizabeth Thomsen presented on "Batches, Baskets, Buckets, Bookbags, and Carousels".   Seven staff members attended the conference.

The coming year's conference will be hosted in-person by CW Mars in late April at a hotel near the Worcester Public Library.

Annual Report and Action Plan
The FY22 Annual Report and Action Plan report was distributed. Any questions can be directed to Ron. The documents will also be available on the Staff Information System.

Next month, NOBLE's FY24 Action Plan will be brought up at the Members Meeting for approval.

MBLC Funding Requests and Reports
NOBLE received approximately 12% of their budget from MBLC. The annual reports and funding requests for the three Mass. Board of Library Commissioners subsidy categories are due on August 19th. Overall funding for the MBLC's line 9506 funding increased by 5% with the new FY23 budget, which was the MBLC's Legislative Agenda figure. The MBLC received all of their Legislative Agenda requests this year, and even more than requested in their Administration account. So we are expecting subsidies comparable or better than last year for FY23, which amounts we carry over to our FY24 budget. The actual amounts are based on formulas related to data from the networks so the final numbers will not be known until late September.

The MBLC has voted to seek 10% increases in most of their line items for the FY2024 state budget Legislative Agenda, with 30% increases requested for the network line item, 7000-9506, and the two Talking Book library line items.

Site Search

NOBLE's lease expires at the end of August 2023 and will not be renewed, as Abiomed bought the building and needs the space. Ron has been working with a commercial real estate agent who presented a portfolio of eleven options in the area with a wide range of prices. Ron also identified a twelfth site and has recommended that site to Executive Board as the one to pursue further.

NOBLE is seeking to reduce the size of the office space, and without the need for a server room can look for standard office space. They plan to retain the large meeting room and provide individual office spaces for the staff for health concerns and due to the increased use of Zoom and phone consultations, which can be distracting to others in open office space.

Abiomed will release NOBLE from their lease without penalty and would like NOBLE to move sooner rather than later. Ron noted that the good thing about moving now is that NOBLE no longer needs the flex/lab space with higher electrical and air conditioning needs since the servers have been moved to the cloud. Previous moves were more complicated due to needing to coordinate and synchronize moving Comcast and telecomm equipment to avoid disruption to libraries.

Myron Schirer-Suter asked if the move will affect EZProxy. Martha Driscoll reported that she planned to move EZProxy to the cloud, but if this cannot be done before the move, the server can be physically relocated with only a brief outage.

eCard and eRenew Project

NOBLE will soon be starting on the automated eCard and eRenew service, which will expedite issuing of cards, particularly for access to electronic resources. Quipu will provide a live registration form that can be integrated into websites and interacts with Evergreen. The service will provide instant, verified access to the electronic resources of NOBLE and the appropriate library to the applicant by checking the last name and address against databases such as the U.S. Postal Service. It will also check the NOBLE database for an existing account. The service will then issue a barcode that can be used to access electronic resources. This service is primarily for public libraries because academic libraries automatically load student records into Evergreen. This should make it easier for anyone to get a library card, even outside of library hours. The service will also be able to renew library cards using the same verification process.

This project has been funded by the MBLC, which has been working towards making getting a library card easier. As part of the MBLC's DEI initiatives, they are funding additional languages for the registration form. The account application will be available in eight languages beyond English including: Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese - Simplified, Haitian, Russian, Vietnamese, Arabic and Albanian. The list was developed based on input from library directors and the top ten languages identified in the census and in acute care hospitals in Massachusetts.

Elizabeth Thomsen
OverDrive:
Elizabeth reported that NOBLE renewed the simultaneous access magazine package in September. Last fiscal year the total magazine circulation was over 31,000, with the top five titles being Us Weekly, New Yorker, Woman's World, and the Economist.

NOBLE is working on setting up Cost Per Circ collections of books in languages other than English as a way to provide a variety of material in other languages with minimal investment. This will help with DEI initiatives to incorporate languages that are in our service areas. Elizabeth noted that she is looking for volunteers with language expertise to look at what kinds of materials is available in OverDrive and possibly help with some basic translation of OverDrive categories like "Books for Children." NOBLE is also running reports on the physical collections to see what titles, authors, subjects and genres are popular in each language. NOBLE will also be seeking input from academic libraries about what languages and titles may be helpful for learning languages.

Elizabeth reported that there is a new Overdrive shelf talker feature that lets NOBLE and Advantage libraries add notes seen to individual titles. Shelf talker notes appear to each library's own patrons and override any consortium shelf talker notes. This feature is useful for tying titles to programs and for staff picks and is very easy to do.

Working Groups:
Elizabeth reported that the three Working Groups are getting started. ERDWG has had its first meeting and voted to give Chris Amorosi a second term as chair and set up their meeting schedule for the year. The Resource Sharing Working Group has their first meeting scheduled for September 28th and the Collection Management Working Group has their first meeting scheduled for October 18th.

Discussion Groups:
Elizabeth reported that the Discussion Groups are also active. The Young Adult Librarians discussion group met on August 30th and are working on their schedule for the year. The Library Programming discussion group met yesterday and is working on their schedule for the year, and the Inclusive Libraries discussion group and the Social Media and Marketing discussion group are doing a little reorganizing but should be meeting soon. A new Children's Services discussion group is forming with Ashley Kempkes from Everett taking the lead.

System Manager's Report
Martha Driscoll
Martha reported that there are three libraries planning building renovations this year and NOBLE has been working with Melrose and Marblehead to move the Comcast internet service from the library to the temporary locations. Gloucester is also planning a move and NOBLE staff have been helping all three libraries make decisions about loan rules and copy statuses to help with the transition to smaller temporary space.

NOBLE is having an MBLC grant-funded cyber security analysis performed to look at three areas: the Google cloud environment where the Evergreen system is hosted, our Google Workspace account, and data backup strategies. There was an initial call at the end of August to introduce the consultant to the MOBIUS management team. The security report is expected this fall.

Ron noted that NOBLE is also meeting with Gloucester to work on curbside service.

5. PRESENTATION OF NOBLE BUDGET
Ron Gagnon
Ron noted that there are three sections of the budget. The basic NOBLE budget and assessment covers: personnel and administrative costs, site costs and insurance, Evergreen system, networking and telecom, central cataloging/database maintenance, Digital Heritage, Staff Info System, and Statistics Dashboard.

Ron noted that there are particular challenges and issues this year including: occupancy cost change, remote hosting transition, insurance escalation, inflation, and fair and competitive staff salaries.

NOBLE's budget distribution includes personnel, office administration, occupancy, computer support, data access, telecomm, professional services, continuing education, equipment upgrades, and online and database costs.

Ron reported that NOBLE is continuing to move toward greater long-term resiliency. Moving to more standard operations that will let NOBLE staff focus on service to members and make it easier to hire staff in the future. There is also an increased focus on cybersecurity.

Ron noted that the servers and server room have moved to the cloud and the office move will be coming soon. NOBLE has ended web hosting on site, 90% of the telecommunications upgrades have been completed, and the bookkeeping system has been upgraded.

Moving to cloud hosted servers eliminates the need for staff to have hardware expertise, focuses staff time on service rather than hardware. Previously, hardware failures were a constant concern that required staff intervention. Operating system upgrades and security patches for servers required downtime for libraries.

Remote Hosting has eliminated hardware investments and server and equipment maintenance costs. Ron noted that it has also reduced single points of failure, reduces HVAC and utility costs, and allows more flexibility for office location. However, remote hosting requires an ongoing commitment to outside vendor for Evergreen and the other servers, using Google or Amazon cloud, offers redundant servers, power and internet providers for consistent service, operating systems are constantly updated, and offers improved cybersecurity.

Ron reported that Evergreen has been moved to non-profit MOBIUS in April and is hosted in Google Cloud. MOBIUS has library and system expertise and another level of backup support. Ron noted that Evergreen hosting is complicated and requires many servers, and is not a straightforward do-it-ourselves project. However, NOBLE staff will continue to support libraries.

NOBLE will also transition smaller services to other servers including: List Maker, Digital Heritage, Statistics Dashboard, and NOBLE's website. These sites are managed by NOBLE and hosted by Digital Ocean and Blue Host. NOBLE received $184,300 in Payroll Protection Plan funding during FY2020 and FY2021 and are using these funds to bridge transition costs to remote hosting over first three years. Occupancy cost savings are also expected to contribute to hosting costs. The FY24 budget also includes $77,000 in reserve funds to maintain level assessments for libraries.

Ron reported that NOBLE moved from AccountEdge to QuickBooks on January 1st, which is the leading accounting package. QuickBooks offers expertise and support, improved reporting and tracking, and remote and hosted options. NOBLE worked with a consultant to migrate the data, and the consultant also provided training.

After 29 years, NOBLE will be moving out of the current flex space building to normal office space. The lease ends August 31, 2023 and the building has been sold so there is no option for renewal. The current office park has become a hub for medical tech, with Abiomed, Medtronic, Millipore all needing lab and tech spaces. NOBLE no longer needs flex space for servers and can reduce the physical space in a new office and get more reasonable rates. There will also be savings on electric and maintenance costs.

Ron reported that the telecommunications upgrade is underway and that library routers and main switches are being replaced at libraries served by NOBLE. The old equipment was nearing end of support. The new equipment triples available bandwidth and replacing routers with firewalls offers increased cybersecurity protection. The funding for the upgrade was provided by a MBLC Infrastructure grant, a Cybersecurity grant, and NOBLE capital funds.

Ron reported that cybersecurity has been improved by cloud hosting that offers the latest patches and security experts. MOBIUS audited for cybersecurity and are SOC2 compliant. A cybersecurity consultant is reviewing NOBLE's Google Work- space, Google Cloud Evergreen, backups, firewalls and the security and confidentiality of staff accounts. In addition, generic Evergreen client accounts have been eliminated and all staff are required to sign confidentiality agreements to access Evergreen library records.

Ron reported that there are some new initiatives in the FY24 budget including the eCard online application form and verification system for borrowers' card applications, which MBLC provided 75% of the funding for. The Linked Data initiative that makes libraries' holdings more findable in a Google search.

There is no increase in NOBLE's main assessment and costs will be the same as they were in FY23. Assessments are based on a formula: 75% divided equally, 12.5% on three-year average circulation, and 12.5% on active users in public libraries and FTE enrollment for academic libraries. Assessments were frozen at the FY20 level and there is a small break for institutions that provide their own telecommunication services.

Ron reported that the NOBLE is concerned with the cost of living and the impacts of passing those costs on to member libraries. A chart comparing Boston's CPIU and NOBLE's assessments compared over 18 years was shared. MBLC funding from FY22 was applied to NOBLE's FY23 budget. NOBLE received $173,660 for resource sharing, $37,849 telecomm (1% decrease), $33,186 for LEA eBook collection, and $21,604 for infrastructure.

Ron reported that MBLC's FY23 line 7000-9506 was up 5% for FY23 will be applied to NOBLE's FY24 budget, but NOBLE won't know exact amounts until late September. State funding varies and has been record high over the last couple of years.

Ron reported that NOBLE's capital account balance was $859,626, which is about 6% lower than last year due to spending for course materials improvements, Linked Library service, Telecomm upgrade, Ecard (allocated, not yet spent). NOBLE received funding from MBLC for cybersecurity and will return about $12,000 back into capital. Ron reported that NOBLE has a contingency account with $750,000. It is recommended that NOBLE retain a 6 month rainy day fund. NOBLE also has an MBLC Infrastructure fund balance of $1,612 remaining after the firewall project.

Jenny Benedict asked about the proposal for raising the Overdrive allocation from $233,200 to $250,000 and noted that the budget included the $233,200 allocation. Ron noted that the allocation has not been approved yet, and would be a wash because it will not affect the bottom line.

Ron reported that the EBSCO contract was renewed for three years with a 2% increase per year upon the recommendation of ERDWG and votes from Executive Board and Members. The basic package of 11 databases, $5,126 mandatory charge for libraries (FY23) except BHCC and SSU, additional optional databases at discount. The contract includes NoveList (catalog and service) which is paid from NOBLE's budget.

Ron reported that 13 libraries participate in NOBLE's PC Support Onsite Service. The service includes optional onsite installations, software updating, and repairs. The budget proposes a 5.25% increase, which is the first increase since FY19 due to personnel and mileage costs. The number of PCs in the program is reduced due to libraries moving to temporary locations for renovations. The current rates are $127 per PC per year, a base fee of $295 per member, and a 7% surcharge for PC/printing management systems.

Ron noted that the budget proposes a 7% increase in the Overdrive allocation to $250,000. This is the first increase since FY20, and is on a par with other Mass. consortia on a per library basis. NOBLE falls third of seven in spending.

Ron reported that there is variation in assessments tied to usage. OverDrive circulation was level in FY22 with a 8.1% decrease in ebooks, a 13.5% increase in audiobooks, and a 38% increase in magazine usage. Over time, audiobook are growing faster than ebooks. The number of unique users continues to grow.

Advantage Plus allows individual libraries the option to purchase titles with local funds to meet local needs. Libraries can curate welcome page with local interest items and 23 out of 25 libraries participate. NOBLE has revamped the OverDrive magazine collection with better titles, now with 4,000 titles available. NOBLE has a reciprocal lending agreement with other networks to share collections, which broadens user choices. Kovel's Antiques & Collectibles Information has also been added to the collections, which was cheaper to purchase centrally than the pricing for individual libraries.

The Libby app is a simpler, more user friendly and offers usage animations in the app which helps promote the service and increase usage.

Ron displayed a chart of FY22 Network Investments showing expenditures of the networks vs. Advantage Plus expenditures by individual libraries. NOBLE is under $500,000, which is a reasonable expenditure for the size of the consortium. The FY23 OverDrive budget includes $17,250 for audiobooks, $25,000 for magazines, $2,500 for Kovel's, $60,000 for new bestsellers, $10,000 for older titles, $91,700 for holds, and $29,000 for copy renewals. The MBLC pays the $12,000 annual platform fee. During FY22, $274,754 was spent by Advantage libraries and NOBLE received a grant for $66,345 in MBLC LEA funds.

Ron reported that the OverDrive distribution formula had been updated and they first subtract use of the library's Advantage items from the library's total usage, and then the usual formula is applied with 50% based on last year's assessment and 50% based on last year's usage. Academic libraries see high percentage but low dollar changes due to small amounts. Public libraries tend to have a tighter range due to usage and Advantage spending.

OverDrive's cost per circulation is low, with the average cost of $1.02 during FY22. This number has increased from 95.7¢ in FY21 and includes platform costs, all materials, and little or no labor cost for preparation and management.

Ron noted that the budget was reviewed and recommended by Executive Board on September 14th and was presented for Members' consideration today and will be voted at our next Members Meeting on October 20th at 10am.

5. SYSTEMS AND TELECOM UPDATE
Martha Driscoll

Martha reported that the Evergreen system has been hosted by MOBIUS on the Google Cloud since last April. The system has been stable and even faster. MOBIUS has been very responsive to any questions and problems. A few recent incidents have caused some Evergreen down time. On August 19th there were some memory errors causing Evergreen to be slow and unresponsive. This happened a few times over a few days. Some adjustments were made to the database configuration and some software patches were installed. Martha noted that when NOBLE began hosting Evergreen on their servers, it was necessary to allocate memory and other resources to the database, and it required tweaking to get it right. The new cloud host offers larger space, but still requires tweaking.

On Aug 24th, there was an incident that required two hours of down time. Google replaced the primary database server during the night but one of the drives did not rebuild correctly. Google Cloud will replace servers to swap out the underlying hardware which is a good thing. Usually it is not noticeable because of the mirroring that Google does, but a drive did not restore properly. It took 2 hours for MOBIUS to restore the data on the drive, but no data was lost.

Martha reported that EZProxy needs a home in the cloud and she has requested pricing from OCLC and is looking into the possibility of DigitalOcean to host EZProxy. Both options will cause a change to the IP addresses and that will require notifying vendors. This project is a high priority and Martha plans to provide plenty of lead time for libraries to update their IP addresses with vendors.

Martha reported that Apogee IT Services took over maintenance and monitoring of the network and libraries' routers and switches on July 1st. The transition was smooth. Firewall and switch replacements have been ongoing since mid-August. Apogee has been replacing the end of life Cisco equipment with faster and more secure Fortigate firewalls and Aruba switches. The switches provide Gigabit throughput over the 100Mbps older switches. The faster switches can utilize the full bandwidth of the Comcast connection. Most sites experienced glitches during the upgrades, but most have been resolved.

Jonathan Nichols reported that Swampscott was experiencing a lot of issues with their wifi since the upgrade. He noted that people are constantly getting kicked off the wifi and it won't hold a constant connection. Martha had some ideas about what was causing the issue and will open a ticket with Apogee. She noted there is a setting about how long a device has an address, and it is usually a long time so libraries can run out of addresses. They can shorten the time and that often solves the problem. Rachel Overbeck reported that Stoneham was experiencing a similar issue.

7. EBSCO UPDATE
Elizabeth Thomsen
Elizabeth reported that there was an authentication change for the shared databases that has turned out to be more complicated than anticipated. Cookies are not working the way that is described in the documentation and are supposed to make it easier for remote users to get back into a database without having to enter their barcode each time. Ron and Elizabeth met with EBSCO reps in person last week and are arranging a meeting with an EBSCO implementation specialist over the next few weeks to help streamline the set-up and get everything working correctly. The old authentication is still working. Elizabeth noted that starting next week, she is setting up meetings with each library to get their links worked out and individually tested both in the library and remotely.

Elizabeth reported that everything is mostly working with Linked Data and NOBLE holdings are showing up in Google and The Open Library. Elizabeth is working with the NoveList representative to resolve some library name issues and link scope issues for libraries with branches when more than one branch has the title. Elizabeth noted that the Reading Public Library's holdings were showing up, but their name was listed as the Reading Community Library.

Elizabeth reported that she is working on getting each library set up with access to the administrative site to get statistics. Libraries may want to request accounts for staff members who will be able to access the accounts and use the tools in the system that can make widgets like automated self-updating carousels.

8. FALL TRAINING OVERVIEW
Elizabeth Thomsen

Elizabeth reported that Roundtables are designed to bring people together to share ideas and ask questions. Training sessions are to teach something. At this point, roundtables are being held in hybrid mode, asking people to indicate whether they plan to attend in person or online when they register. The meetings are converted to online only if fewer than three people indicate they plan to attend in person. Elizabeth noted that the Circulation Roundtable scheduled on Tuesday only had one person planning to come in person, so it became online only. Two more roundtables are coming up: Tech Services next Wednesday and World Languages on October 13th. It looks like both of those will be hybrid.

Amy Lannon asked what the roundtables are working on. Elizabeth reported that the Tech Services group is discussing work flow and concerns about vendors and supply times. The World Language group is new and will be discussing registration form languages, languages in OverDrive, acquisitions of materials in other languages, how libraries serve people who speak other languages, and how collections are organized. Elizabeth noted that people have difficulty using ListMaker on language materials because collections are cataloged differently in each library, and NOBLE can help with running these reports.

Amy Lannon thanked Elizabeth for the information and noted that there are no formal liaisons to roundtables and members don't always hear about the topics being discussed at the meetings.

Elizabeth reported that training sessions are all being scheduled as one-hour sessions online. The sessions are moving back to basics: starting in October there will be required training sessions for the designated cataloging and designated circulation representative which are intended to go over: how Evergreen works in those areas in some depth, including the administrative aspects like how loan rules work, how billing works, adding shelving locations, etc. This will include some options and functions libraries may not be using, or may not be aware exist. These trainings are mostly designed for department heads.

Elizabeth reported that she will also be doing some separate training sessions for circ desk staff and for cataloging inputters, which won't cover administrative aspects but will focus on the most common Evergreen workflows in these areas. These sessions will become a regular rotation to make it easier to train new hires and help staff needing a refresher.

Elizabeth noted that all training will be supported by specific documentation and screencasts. Evergreen documentation is being revised and moved into a new site with a knowledgebase front end, making it much easier to search and locate information.

Linda Gardener noted she loves the Linked Data service and how it advertises libraries and she is very excited for the designated contact training. Linda asked if the training for more general staff could be recorded so that part time employees could watch it. Elizabeth noted that she has been recording sessions with varying amounts of success. She noted that she is not seeing a lot of usage of the recordings and is

trying to make screencasts of functions to streamline training and reduce the time required to find the information.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Catherine McDonald noted that there is a NOBLE Directors meeting coming up a week from tomorrow. Amy noted that Ron sends out an email and it is a good way to get to know eachother.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Brian Courtemanche made a motion to adjourn at 11:38am.

1 Allison Babin (she/her) Beverly Public Library

2 Noelle Boc (she/her) Danvers - Peabody Institute Library

3 Brian Courtemanche Endicott College - Diane M. Halle Library

5 Jenny Benedict Gloucester - Sawyer Free Library

6 Myron Schirer-Suter Gordon College - Jenks Library

7 Theresa Hurley Lynn Public Library

8 Abby Porter (she/her/hers) Lynnfield Public Library

9 Kimberly Grad Marblehead - Abbot Public Library

10 Linda Gardener Melrose Public Library

11 Catherine Robertson (she/her) Montserrat College of Art - Paul M. Scott Library

12 Ron Gagnon NOBLE Staff

13 Martha Driscoll NOBLE Staff

14 Camille Torres Hoven (She/Her) Phillips Academy

15 Amy Lannon (she/her) Reading Public Library

16 Jim Riordan Salem Public Library

18 Nancy George Salem State University Frederick E. Berry Library

19 Alan Thibeault Saugus Public Library

20 Rachel Overbeck (she/her) Stoneham Public Library

21 Jonathan Nichols Swampscott Public Library

22 Catherine McDonald Wakefield - Beebe Memorial Library

23 Elizabeth Thomsen NOBLE Staff