

NOBLE Executive Board Meeting Minutes - Virtual August 13, 2025

Present: Kathy Lussier, Catherine McDonald, Theresa Hurley, Myron Schirer-Suter, Allison Babin, Brian Courtemanche, Jonathan Nichols, Rachel Overbeck, Abby Porter, Anna Sarneso

1. Call to Order

Catherine called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

2. Approval of minutes for June 11, 2025

Myron made the motion to approve the minutes from June 11, 2025, seconded by Theresa. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

Myron explained that the preliminary end of year report in the packet is not final as there will likely be some changes during the audit process. 94% of the operating budget was spent.

Kathy reminded the Board that any remaining funds are typically used to offset future assessments.

4. Executive Director's Report

Kathy reviewed the Director's Report, which included the following:

- Aspen: Public preview went live on July 7. NOBLE staff have been busy tweaking based on member libraries' feedback. Targeting September 15 for "go live" for public libraries; academics may go earlier. A patron survey helped identify some issues (e.g. a need to make the ComCat link more prominent).
- Gordon-Conwell Migration: Will migrate data in early January. Their assessment has been pro-rated accordingly.
- e-Rate filtering: Filters have been installed at 3 pilot libraries (Beverly, Swampscott, Winthrop). There has only been one issue so far (Massachusetts Municipal Association website was incorrectly blocked). Melrose is interested in possibly being a pilot too.
- Evergreen Upgrade: The upgrade process was a little time crunched. NOBLE is reviewing the process for improvement as we move to the annual schedule of one upgrade per year.
- ECDI: ECDI has posted the position to hire a new part-time Program Director. Interviews will be held next week.
- MLA Legislative Work: On July 22, the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development held hearings on bills pertaining to libraries, including several Freedom to Read bills and a bill to establish a commission to further investigate solutions for

licensing digital content. Most oral testimony was in favor of the proposed legislation, with a small handful of people testifying against the Freedom to Read bill. The legislature is under new rules this session requiring the committee to report on the bill within 60 days of the hearing with a possible 30-day extension. The committee is expected to address an issue with the current draft of the bill (which focuses on public libraries) to also address academic, school, etc.

5. Working Group/Committee Appointments and Board Liaisons

Catherine McDonald shared the list of library staff members being appointed to the FY26 Working Groups. Executive Board liaisons need to be appointed. Jonathan volunteered for the Marketing Working Group. Theresa volunteered for the Resource Sharing Working Group. Abby volunteered for the Advocacy Committee. Liaisons are still needed for the Collection Management Working Group and the Electronic Resources and Database Working Group (ERDWG).

Kathy mentioned that there is some momentum to expand Advocacy efforts to be more regional in nature (i.e. a Northeastern group that would collaborate with MVLC).

6. Vote to Approve FY26 OverDrive Allocations*

Kathy presented Elizabeth Thomsen's proposed budget for OverDrive spending, which includes some shifts in simultaneous user plans. Instead of renewing all of our Simultaneous Use audiobook collections, we will only be renewing one 25-title collection from Blackstone Audio and one 25-title collection from Tantor. In its place, NOBLE proposes allocating funds towards the All Access Romance collection, which provides Simultaneous-Use access to 1,777 titles that are refreshed on a quarterly basis.

Allison Babin made a motion to approve the OverDrive Budget for FY26 as presented, seconded by Abby Porter. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Membership Proposal for Nahant Public Library*

Anna and Catherine worked with Kathy to ensure a fair, sustainable membership proposal for Nahant Public Library. Kathy reviewed the average and median percentages of public library operating budgets that go toward NOBLE assessment, which led to calculating a reduced fee of \$10,436 for FY27. Kathy reminded the Board that Nahant would also qualify for offsets of more than \$2,000. Kathy will present the proposal in person to the Director of the Nahant Public Library.

Theresa made a motion to set the Associate Member Fee to \$10,436 for FY2027, contingent on Nahant becoming a NOBLE member, seconded by Brian. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Executive Director Request for Remote Work Accommodation*

Current NOBLE policy allows employees to work remotely 2 days a week. To care for a parent with a serious health condition, Kathy requested a remote work accommodation that would allow her to work remotely as needed. She plans to work onsite on Mondays.

The Board authorized Catherine to work with Kathy if she needs to make a Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) request.

Rachel made a motion to approve a remote work accommodation for Kathy Lussier, to allow her to work remotely as needed, seconded by Theresa. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Preliminary FY27 Budget Discussion

The Board had a high-level discussion about the budget for the next fiscal year. All Board members agreed that individual library budgets are expected to be very tight. Discussion points included:

- Catherine is constructing multiple budgets for FY27 and looking at different scenarios, but is preparing to not be able to increase much.
- Jonathan spoke about the importance of remembering that the increase to assessments is spread out over 5 years.
- Anna suggested looking at all NOBLE budget lines closely and figuring out if any reductions can be made.
- Kathy stated that revenue increases will be found in the benefits line and Gordon-Conwell joining the network.
- Funds that were budgeted in FY25 for the Salesforce consultant last year can be used in FY26.
- The network monitoring vendor is a big concern. Quotes obtained from two vendors came in very high. Kathy is exploring partnering with OCLN to reduce cost. This is not something we can give up given the current issues with cybersecurity.
- Mobile app needs to be evaluated.
- Kathy emphasized the importance of the deduplication project.
- Exploring a new event management system for NOBLE is one of the lower priorities in the action plan and not likely to be prioritized in FY27.

Kathy's hope is to be able to cover these things without seeing an increase to members.

10. Potential Legal Review for Massachusetts Data Privacy Act*

Kathy became aware of the [Massachusetts Data Privacy Act](#) which is currently sitting in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. This legislation could impact patron data we collect in our systems. A presenter at ALA recommended consulting an attorney early on to understand the effects of the act on library data collection. This early analysis provides an opportunity to request language changes to the bill if there are concerns for libraries. Kathy reached out to the

other MA library networks to see if there is interest in pooling funds for an attorney specializing in data privacy to review the legislation. The expected cost is \$5,000 - \$8,000.

Brian made a motion to approve contributing \$1,000 for legal review of the proposed legislation, seconded by Allison. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Written testimony to support eBook legislation*

Discussion was not needed on this agenda item due to recent developments with the legislation.

12. Gordon-Conwell and Holds

The Board reviewed a previous discussion about whether the network should allow out-of-state campuses to place holds/borrow network materials. Kathy now has a better picture of what Gordon-Conwell branches are like: Jacksonville is basically self-service; Boston is too but Hamilton staff are sometimes on-site. The Board confirmed it is still in favor of allowing these requests; however, Kathy will investigate customizing Evergreen to fill holds from out of state campuses as a last resort. An exception to the normal process may be warranted.

13. New Business

NOBLE staff had a great meeting with Old Colony Library Network (OCLN). OCLN currently uses SirsiDynix, but is considering Evergreen and Polaris. If OCLN chooses Evergreen, NOBLE would potentially meet with them monthly for support.

Catherine shared information she received about Usha Vance's summer reading program.

Kathy reminded Board members that they are encouraged to attend the September Executive Board meeting in person.

14. Adjournment

Brian moved to adjourn. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 3:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Babin
Clerk