

## **NOBLE Executive Board Meeting Minutes - Hybrid November 12, 2025**

Present: In Person: Kathy Lussier, Catherine McDonald, Jonathan Nichols; Virtual: Theresa Hurley, Myron Schirer-Suter, Allison Babin, Brian Courtemanche, Abby Porter, Anna Sarneso

**1. Call to Order:** Catherine called the meeting to order at 2:04PM.

**2. Approval of minutes of September 18, 2025 and October 8, 2025\***

*Theresa made the motion to approve the minutes from September 18, 2025, seconded by Abby. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Brian made the motion to approve the minutes from October 8, 2025, seconded by Theresa. The motion passed unanimously.*

**3. Treasurer's Report:** Myron reports that nothing is unusual. The auditor has made his last visit. Everything looks good.

**4. Collection Management Team**

Nothing significant to report. The team discussed goals (e.g. maybe moving away from collection assessment) and focusing on what would be most helpful for members. Catherine will report more in December.

**5. Marketing Working Group**

This group held their kick off meeting. The action item for this year was to find one thing to market. Selected Aspen with a goal of January. Will meet monthly initially. In the fall, they may do a "library road trip" campaign. Will survey members for interest.

**6. Executive Director's Report**

- Aspen: Still working through tasks, with the major focus now being on electronic resources. Starting to remove some records from the Evergreen database because they will be loaded through an API. It is a time-consuming process. Had some movement with EBSCO in terms of getting eBook records. Christine is loading. Reached out to a software developer about improving the EBSCO API, which treats eBooks as articles not eBooks. The cost would probably be about \$5k. EBSCO is reaching out to our EDS libraries. Before the end of the calendar year, will add some permissions to staff so they can update hours, etc. There is also an obituary tool which NOBLE is hoping to move to Aspen and away from the local NOBLE server.
- Content Cafe: EBSCO will credit us for the unused portion of this B&T service which provides book jacket images. NOBLE requested quotes from alternate vendors Syndetics and Chilifresh, which may result in savings. Chilifresh uses crowdsourcing for patron reviews and missing cover images, and their quote is less. Syndetics would include professional reviews and TOCs, waiting on their quote. Goal to have something lined up by January.
- Massachusetts Data Privacy Act: The attorney issued guidance. The hope is to get libraries exempted from the House version of this legislation.

- NOBLE: A staff person has been on Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) since August. May need to hire a temp part time to cover duties.
- Salesforce: Consultant has made progress on the prototype for the Customer Relationship Management System for NOBLE. Next step will be to create a ticketing system for support requests. Members should notice no difference in process.
- Flex Spending Account: Paula is working on a new solution for an FSA benefit, allowing employees to enroll on January 1.
- Fine Free Network: Winthrop trustees just voted to remove fines from books, which makes NOBLE a fine-free network!
- NECHE: They got tremendous feedback on that change to the standards that pertain to libraries. They held a listening session on Zoom that reached capacity. Kathy, Anna, and Brian attended.
- MLS Annual Meeting: Kathy attended. Keynote speaker Jay McChord delivered a practical speech with tips and tricks about persuasive communication.
- ECDI: New program director Sarah Moody started and is making good progress. ECDI is looking at a new membership model and developing its budget for FY27.
- MLA Legislative Updates: The Freedom to Read legislation will be up for debate in the Senate tomorrow. The Massachusetts Family Institute is advocating for people to vote against it.

## 7. Overview of NOBLE Reserve Funds and the Contingency Budget

Kathy gave an overview of the different funds NOBLE has available, in light of developing a contingency budget. The board agreed it is important to strike the right balance between having enough, but not too much, in reserve.

- **\$58,859** - Network Infrastructure
  - Can only be used for projects that meet the MBLC's definition of network infrastructure and can be used to purchase networking equipment / servers, to offset our cloud hosting fees, and/or to bolster our CyberSecurity posture.
  - We have recently been using these funds to offset cloud hosting costs, but Kathy has been trying to reduce this contribution due to an expected increase in costs for the service to monitor the networking equipment we support in public libraries.
- **\$750,000** - Contingency Fund
  - This fund should only be used for an emergency and should cover six months of operational expenses.
  - We should consider increasing this fund to about \$1 million.
- **\$768,071** - Capital Fund
  - This fund should be used for capital expenses, such as furniture, networking equipment, and servers.
  - Since we moved to cloud hosting, we don't need to keep as many capital funds on hand to cover expensive server purchases.
- **\$1,124,632** - General unrestricted funds
  - These are funds that have not been designated for a specific purpose.
  - We incorporate some unrestricted funds into our reimbursements for the annual budget.
    - The surplus of a given year is allocated towards the budget of the next year to help offset assessment increases.

- We started adding more unrestricted funds to reimbursements in the FY24 budget to help draw down those funds. Budgets for the last three years have allocated \$90,000 in unrestricted funds to offset expenses.
  - Nevertheless, our unrestricted funds grow every year. The allocation of these funds has served as a cushion, but has not resulted in any loss of equity.
- **\$20,873 - Cloud Hosting Transition**
  - The remaining funds from the Payroll Protection Program.
  - These funds will be fully spent this fiscal year.

## **8. Office Administrator Revised Job Description with Salary Schedule\***

Kathy presented the revised job description and salary schedule for the Office Administrator.

*Allison made the motion to approve the revised job description with salary schedule retroactive to November 1, seconded by Anna. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **9. Payment Procedures and Sanctions for Non-payment Proposed Revision\***

This proposed revision is a follow-up from the Beverly Solicitor's Office's spring review of the new Member Services Agreement. She objected to the piece of the policy charging interest on overdue payments because municipal finance law mandates that municipalities can only pay for services or goods rendered and cannot incur liability in excess of appropriate. The NOBLE attorney was okay with this explanation. The policy includes a suspension of service for libraries that do not pay in a timely manner. This action is probably more of an incentive for timely payments than any interest that is charged.

*Jonathan made the motion to recommend the revisions to payment procedures and sanctions for non-payment as presented, seconded by Theresa. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **10. Formula for CloudNine Envisionware Reservation Service**

With the new CloudNine service, Envisionware's fee structure has changed. They are now charging us based on our entire service population, including those libraries that do not subscribe to Envisionware. If we add or drop new libraries, there is no change to our fee.

Kathy presented several options on how to incorporate the charge for this service into the assessment. The board agreed with her suggestion of calculating it for participating libraries by device count.

## **11. Capital Request - Backstage Library Services\***

NOBLE's FY26 action plan includes an action to investigate and recommend a deduplication/standardization process or service for the bibliographic database. One of the core services of the network is to provide centralized cataloging services because it is more affordable for each member library to contribute to that service than to try to do cataloging on their own. Maintaining a high-quality bibliographic database is critical to making it easier for patrons to find the materials they need.

NOBLE requested a quote from Backstage Library Works to deduplicate the database, run an authority-processing service, and to upgrade the records to provide more subject headings,

move brief records to fully-catalog records, to add summaries, and to enhance the records in other ways. The record enhancement service was pricey with an expectation that just 25% of records requiring an upgrade would be upgraded.

NOBLE is recommending that we proceed with the de-duplication and one-time authority processing service to improve the quality of the database. Although NOBLE would also like to continue with ongoing authority record processing, this expense was ultimately cut from the FY27 budget.

Elizabeth joined the meeting to speak further about the critical need for this process. NOBLE has never done authority control, which is unusual compared to other library networks. It will result in improved findability and updated language, as well as the removal of unnecessary duplicate records.

*Jonathan made the motion to transfer \$39,017.13 from capital to fund bibliographic database improvements through a deduplication project and one-time authority control service with RDA Enrichments, seconded by Anna. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **12. New Business**

Bryan will share a resume for an Endicott student seeking a library internship to NOBLE Directors.

Jonathan asked about customizing Aspen to default to NOBLE rather than home library.

## **13. Adjournment**

*Jonathan moved to adjourn. All in favor.*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Allison Babin  
Clerk