

NOBLE Executive Board Meeting via hybrid zoom and in person

April 13, 2022

Present: Ron Gagnon, Elizabeth Thomsen, Martha Driscoll, Myron Schirer-Suter, Linda C.W. Gardener, Theresa Hurley, Nicole Langley, Tara Mansfield, Brian Courtemanche, Catherine McDonald, Allison Babin,

1. Call to Order/Welcome

The Meeting was called to order by Brian at 2:03pm

2. Approval of Minutes

Nicole made the motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Myron. All in favor.

3. Treasurer's Report

Myron stated that everything is on track.

4. Executive Director's Report

ECCF Grant Internet Updates

Ron updated the board regarding the Essex County Community Foundation grant that was awarded to NOBLE to upgrade public internet connectivity at three gateway city libraries- Lynn, Peabody and Salem. Salem was upgraded a few weeks ago. Lynn has been upgraded and Peabody's upgrade was attempted last week but was unsuccessful.

Nicole asked Ron is there is anything that the executive board needs to do regarding the unsuccessful upgrade. Ron stated that that would be addressed in item 7 of the agenda.

ECCF Presentation

Ron stated that he presented on NOBLE's ECCF-funded Gateway Cities Internet upgrade project at Lynn, Salem and Peabody to the ECCF's Digital Equity Coalition Meeting on March 31 via zoom

Course Materials Improvements

In October, the Executive Board appropriated \$12,000 from capital to fund 18 bug fixes and improvements in the Evergreen course materials module. The work is being done by Catalyte who did the original programming. Ron stated that the work has gone a little bit slower than expected. Some of the fixes have been incorporated into the Evergreen instance and other patches are being tested by NOBLE staff as time allows. Three were on the list for testing by the Evergreen community's Bug Squashing Week last week for inclusion in the next interim release. One was committed, another was signed off and another was sent back for further refinement. Three of the 18 improvements will not be completed in this round due to greater complexity than expected.

MLA Legislative Day

Ron attended the MLA Legislative Day via Zoom on April 7th. The week prior, Ron met with Sally Kerans, the state representative for Danvers and parts of Peabody, Wenham, and Middleton. Ron stated that he plans on reaching out to Senator Joan Lovely to support the library line items in FY23 state budget. The House Ways and Means budget is expected out today, with resolution expected by the end of April. Ron reminded the board to contact their state senator and ask them to prioritize library funding.

Health Insurance Cost Increase

Ron informed the board that NOBLE's Tufts health insurance costs increased 7.6% for the new plan year starting April 1st. There are also some increases on copays that will increase employee costs if certain services are used. NOBLE has budgeted for a 10% increase so the 7.6% increase does not present a problem. Brian asked if they were happy with the health insurance. Ron noted that they were.

Fines

The Lynn Public Library and Abbot Public Library of Marblehead are now fine free. This leaves Everett, Salem, and Winthrop as the only public libraries still charging fines.

Trainings

Elizabeth is setting a schedule for spring trainings. Elizabeth will be hosting the first in-person training next week.

5. Evergreen Cloud Hosting Update

Ron updated that NOBLE would be moving to Google Cloud with MOBIUS on Monday, April 18, closing the local systems at 7:15pm when almost all libraries would be closed in observance of Patriot's Day. There will be several hours of downtime in the evening. Their new cloud system is running and fully configured but final data updates and switchovers will be done during this time. Ron stated that everything should be working fine on Tuesday morning. Libraries that are open on Monday evening will see several hours of downtime.

Martha will be putting up maintenance message screen for several hours on Monday evening for home users. Some electronic resources that authenticate users with the Evergreen system will also be unavailable for a few hours. Some delays may occur as the IP address change of the Evergreen system is updated across the Internet since it will now be in a new physical location. Resources authenticated through the proxy servers should have continuous access through the changeover.

NOBLE is partnering with MOBIUS that does this type of work with other systems. They are very active in the Evergreen community, helping to improve and support Evergreen. The systems will be hosted in the Google Cloud, and MOBIUS has years of experience providing this service.

Ron stated that there is a cost of \$64,507 a year, with 2% increases. There is a one-time cost for migration and setup of \$8000. NOBLE will no longer purchase, maintain and host their own Evergreen hardware. MOBIUS can also provide support. The move would save NOBLE from investing in replacement servers, HVAC upgrade and maintenance charges. With NOBLE relocating in August of 2023, it would save on occupancy costs by using more readily available office space.

Ron noted that CW MARS is also switching over to MOBIUS hosting in the fall.

Martha stated that everything was going well. The databases are communicating and it should go smoothly with all staff on board next week.

Brian asked Martha if databases on proxy server would be fine. Martha stated it would. Brian stated that Endicott will be open on Monday night and if they should do anything special ahead of time. Martha advised to make staff aware that the system would be down. Martha noted that a thing that is unknown is changing the DNS server and it could take time.

6. Vote to Approve MBLC Cybersecurity Grant

Motion: Move to approve the MBLC Cybersecurity Grant Application

Discussion: Ron stated that the MBLC is making available up to \$25,000 to each of the networks to improve cybersecurity. The funds can be spent through FY2023.

NOBLE is proposing a two-phase plan. First, NOBLE would have a cybersecurity consultant do a gap analysis focusing on three specific areas:

- The security of NOBLE's use of Google Cloud for Evergreen
- Examine and test the security and best practices of their Evergreen backups and ability to recover from backups

- Audit settings and make recommendations for the security of Google Workspace used by NOBLE and libraries for email, documents, etc.

The cost of this phase would be \$12,500

Ron stated that the remainder of the funding would be used to defray some of the cost of their networking upgrade from routers to secure firewalls at libraries served by NOBLE telecommunications and at NOBLE's office. The firewalls have capabilities to protect from threats and attacks using artificial intelligence rules and antivirus capabilities using smart monitoring for active prevention.

Ron noted that if granted, the amount of NOBLE capital funds needed to complete the telecommunications upgrade project would be reduced accordingly.

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

7. Vote to Approve Telecomm System Upgrade with transfers from Infrastructure and Capital Funds

Motion: Move to transfer \$76,291 from Infrastructure reserve account and \$24,329 from capital to install gigabit firewalls in place of routers in public library locations served by NOBLE-provided telecommunications and at NOBLE's office and replace existing managed switches with new gigabit managed switches at the same locations.

Discussion: Ron is proposing that NOBLE change the support company for their networking equipment at NOBLE libraries and NOBLE's office, and launch a project to upgrade the equipment at those location to take advantage of available improved Internet bandwidth and provide greater security for the network and equipment in the libraries.

Ron stated that with the dissatisfaction of the existing company, New Era, and their inability to get the new equipment going, aborted installations and lack of follow through, NOBLE would like to change companies.

NOBLE had been approached by a newer competitor, Apogee. Ron stated that they had worked with one of the principals of the company in the past with a previous company. He is very satisfaction and communication oriented. At that time, NOBLE still had one more year to go on their multi-year contract with New Era. Ron noted that CLAMS had switched last summer and have been very satisfied with Apogee's service.

Ron noted that routers and main switches in libraries that they provide Internet service to is on NOBLE's objectives for this fiscal year. The current equipment is nearing end-of-support by Cisco sand is not able to take advantage of the full Comcast bandwidth that NOBLE is providing. Because of the way the Cisco maintenance works for current hardware, NOBLE would have to sign up for a full year which coincides with their fiscal year and gives them a limited window of opportunity. NOBLE will be moving their office in August of 2023 and Ron thinks it best not to layer that project on at the same time.

Ron is proposing that NOBLE change the support company for their networking equipment at NOBLE libraries and NOBLE's office, and launch a project to upgrade the equipment at those location to take advantage of available improved Internet bandwidth and provide greater security for the network and equipment in the libraries.

Ron recommends that NOBLE move maintenance to Apogee effective July 1st and have them replace the outdated networking hardware this summer. They have proposed Fortinet firewalls and HP switches which will greatly increase cybersecurity as well as throughput.

Ron is proposing using MBLC Infrastructure funds, approximately \$76,291, augmented with a portion from capital, approximately \$24,329 to fund most of the equipment replacement and setup. The current capital account balance is \$888,305 before this project and the Ecard project.

Ron stated that the ongoing maintenance for the managed service will increase over their current New Era Contract by about \$9,200. Their old contract was signed three years ago and would likely be significantly higher at renewal. Apogee was able to reduce their cost proposal by \$8,000. The new equipment is being purchased with three years warranty coverage, lowering the net on the annual budget for the three years.

Two main benefits from this upgrade will include a three-fold increase in available bandwidth in the libraries, from 100 Mbps to 300 Mbps. The bandwidth is already in place but the current router and main switches have 100 Mbps limit. The smaller switches currently in place will not need to be replaced. The other benefit is greater protection from cybersecurity threats. The software in the new firewalls can block intrusions and attacks in real time and prevent external viruses and malware, which the current routers aren't capable of.

Brian asked if there are any issues ending with New Era. Ron stated that there is no issue, the three year contract is up and will NOBLE will give a 30 day notice.

Action: Theresa made the motion, seconded by Nicole. All in favor.

8. Vote to Recommend Ecard Registration and Verification Service to Members

Motion: Move to recommend to the membership that NOBLE agrees to participate in the Massachusetts Statewide eCard Registration Platform project to establish a secure and verified method of online library card registration and renewal for our public library cardholders. Participation is contingent upon the availability of grant funds for the implementation and first year support of the project.

Motion: Move to transfer \$4,350 from capital to fund NOBLE's portion of statewide eCard startup costs, the remainder to be funded by an MBLC grant pending approval of the previous motion by the membership.

Discussion: Ron stated that the eight Massachusetts networks serving public libraries have joined together on a project to provide a uniform and automated online application process to register for a borrowers' card. The goal is to provide instant, verified access to the electronic resources of the network and the library to the applicant. The address of the applicant will be verified instantly and checked in the NOBLE database for an existing account. If new and verified, a card number would be issued, and a record created in Evergreen, allowing access to electronic resources and other possible resources.

Presently about half of the NOBLE libraries have an online application form on their websites, but it requires staff intervention to verify and issue a card number, which may cause a delay allowing access. The new system would be essentially instantaneous for most potential users.

The Massachusetts networks issued an RFP, and received two responses, from Patron Point and Quipu. They have decided to pursue the Quipu proposal.

Ron stated that the MBLC have agreed to support 75% of the startup costs from existing federal funds, and a similar percentage of the ongoing costs as the state budget appropriation allows. The MBLC has promised to increase the line 7000-9506 funding allotted to the networks by \$100,000 each year to cover ongoing costs.

This service will streamline the card expiration and renewal process by allowing existing cardholders to renew and update their cards online through the same verification process.

The startup costs for the pair of services for NOBLE will drop from \$17,400 to \$4,350 with the MBLC grant. Ron is proposing taking from NOBLE's capital funds. Ongoing costs with MBLC funding could be as low as just under \$3,000 per year and the ongoing full ticket would be \$11,115.

Currently, this service is focused on public libraries as the academic libraries issue most of their cards through college registration files. This could change and be accommodated.

The application form would be integrated in each library's website and the NOBLE website. English and one other language are included in the pricing, but additional languages can be added for an additional startup cost of \$500 for each addition, and a \$750 one-time setup charge for right to left languages such as Arabic.

Ron stated that there have been three Zoom demonstrations and they have not heard much discussion or questions about the project. The Resource Sharing Working Group support the concept.

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

Action on second motion: Linda made the motion, seconded by Nicole. All in favor.

9. Vote to Recommend EBSCO Renewal to Members

Motion: Move to recommend to the membership that NOBLE renew our current package of EBSCO services for FY23 through FY25 with annual cost increases of 2%, periodical databases to be paid through a shared assessment and other services paid through the NOBLE budget.

Discussion: Ron informed the board that the current EBSCO contract is up on June 30th. Many of the most heavily accessed titles are unique to EBSCO. Ron reported the deal is 84% off base package due to NOBLE's long history and half off on additional databases compared to New York State contract. ERDWG has recommended renewal for a three year contract, FY23 through FY25. The cost increase of 2% each year on the base package.

Elizabeth mentioned that ERDWG is very much aware of the necessity to academic libraries and that it was a factor as much as the general public usage. Brian stated that academics, in addition to the base package, add on so many additional databases and that this is a tremendous benefit.

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

10. Nominating Committee Report

Brian reported on the nominating committee. Brian stated that Myron agreed to stay on as treasurer and Tara has agreed to be clerk. If agreeable to the slate of nominees, it can progress to the annual meeting for a vote by the full membership. Brian asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none.

Catherine thanked the nominees for agreeing to serve on the board.

11. New Business

Ron noted that the last in-person meeting in the NOBLE office was the executive board meeting on March 11, 2020. Two years later we are meeting at NOBLE again, and it's great to be back.

Elizabeth stated that they are planning for roundtables and will have a hybrid option for those meetings.

Catherine and Linda complimented on the new Owl Video System.

12. Adjournment

Nicole made a motion to adjourn at 3:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Hurley, Clerk

