

NOBLE Executive Board Meeting via zoom

May 11, 2022

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

1. Call to Order/Welcome

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

2. Approval of Minutes

Allison made the motion, seconded by Catherine. All in favor

3. Treasurer's Report

Myron stated that there is nothing new to report

4. Executive Director's Report

Successful Move to Evergreen Cloud Hosting

Ron informed the board that the move to cloud hosting for the Evergreen system through MOBIUS went extremely well due to the efforts by Martha and her team. The move was completed on April 18. Ron reported that the staff at MOBIUS was very helpful and great to work with. They are now working on moving their website, Digital Heritage and other processes to two different hosting services. Elizabeth and her team are supporting libraries as they plan to move their websites.

Telecom Move and Upgrade

NOBLE will be changing their telecom support firm to Apogee from New Era beginning July 1st. Apogee is focused on customer satisfaction and service which had been lacking from New Era.

Ron stated that NOBLE will be replacing the routers in the public libraries with new firewall and managed switches for greater security. Bandwidth will be increased three-fold, from 100 Mbps to 300 Mbps at the time of the equipment change this summer. Contracts for the new services along with a letter terminating NOBLE's prior arrangements were signed and sent in late April.

Generic Evergreen Logins

NOBLE has ended generic library circulation logins on May 2nd with the exception of Merrimack, who requested an extension to the end of the semester. It is a cybersecurity and a responsible circulation issue.

Cybersecurity Grant Awarded

Ron stated that the Cybersecurity grant for \$25,000 in funding from the MBLC was granted. Half of that sum will go to a cybersecurity consultant who will perform a gap analysis and will review NOBLE's Google Workspace and Evergreen Google Cloud settings are correct for maximum security. The other half will help to underwrite the replacement of routers with firewalls at the libraries.

FY23 State Budget

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The House Ways and Means budget met or exceeded the MBLC's Legislative Agenda in all categories except for State Aid to Public Libraries which received a one million dollar increase instead of the three million requested. The House passed the Ways and Means budget for library funding. The network line item is budgeted as the requested 5% increase, \$225,920. The Senate Ways and Means budget meets all of the MOBL's requests exactly, except for the Center for Book line, which is \$100,000 less.

Welcome to NOBLE! Document

Ron stated that he has collected a variety of information about NOBLE and their operations into a new 18 –page Welcome to NOBLE! Document on the Staff Information System. This was one of NOBLE’s FY22 Objectives.

Second Owl

NOBLE has acquired a second OWL meeting device as they prepare for larger hybrid meetings. Ron stated that Suzanne has updated the meeting registration form which will require people to pick whether they will be attending in person or remotely.

Moving Libraries

Ron stated that NOBLE is `providing support to two member libraries planning moves to accommodate renovation projects. Marblehead will be moving to an unused elementary school in August and Gloucester is preparing for a temporary relocation.

Course Materials Improvements

Ron informed the Board that NOBLE continues to work with Catalyte on the 18 improvements to the Evergreen course materials module for which the Board approved \$12,000 in capital funding in November. Three have been put aside for unexpected complexity, two are still under testing and the rest are working their way through getting into core Evergreen. The project has used all the capital funding allocated and the remaining amount will be taken from the normal budget Evergreen development line.

Attending MLA

Ron stated that he and Elizabeth will be attending both days of the Mass. Library Association annual conference in Hyannis May 23 and 24.

5. Standard Overdue and Billing Policy

Motion: Move to recommend to the Members Meeting revisions to the Standard Overdue and Billing Policy (tabled)

Motion: Allison and Nicole will work on a blocked and billing issue in the network and report back in six months with recommendations. Motion made by Amy, Linda seconded. All in favor.

Background: An earlier version of the policy engendered a request for clarification asking who’s over dues, a particular library or any library? The sentence for which clarification was requested:

A long overdue block will be placed on the patron’s record at 42 days after the due date. The block will prevent patrons from self-checkout/renew/holds. The block can be overridden by staff in the library if deemed appropriate for that library’s materials only

The Resource Sharing Working Group’s recommend clarification was that both the overdue items and the item(s) to be checked out had to belong to the same library as performing the transaction. This is the change to that sentence that was recommended by the Executive Board and voted at Members meeting in March:

The block can be overridden by staff in a library if deemed appropriate, only if the long overdue items and the items to be checked out belong solely to that library.

This was not a unanimous Members Meeting vote, as is typical, it caused some concern. It passed 11 to 4. At the Members meeting and subsequently, concern has been expressed about the implications of the revision on service.

Our current rules are:

- Patron owes too much money – blocked at \$50
- Patron has a Long Overdue item – blocked at 1
- Patron has a Lost item – blocked at 1

For consideration:

Instead of blocking on one item long overdue, we can block on the amount owed, the dollar amount only. The amount would be a combination of replacement costs, fines and miscellaneous charges. The borrower would not be blocked for a long overdue if the cost were below the system setting, such as \$10 or whatever is decided, if they did not have substantial other debts in the system.

Benefit – borrowers would not be blocked for a low-cost long overdue if their total is below the threshold.

Caveat – More patrons may be blocked for fines and miscellaneous charges, as currently that threshold is \$50, and based on the examples cited in our discussions, that could be lowered to \$10 or so. Only three public libraries currently charge fines.

A different option:

All libraries, or a subgroup of libraries, could decide to give each other discretion, limited to the discretion of the circulation supervisor on duty, to override blocks. Library participation would be optional, and could be listed on the Staff Information System for easy reference. A discretion level could be agreed on in advance, or left to the situation.

No system settings would need to be changed. The staff user performing the override transaction would be recorded in the system transaction automatically for later reference (as with all transactions). This would not necessarily be circulation supervisor unless they logged in to perform the transaction.

As Alan Thibeault wisely notes, “Discretion is not a policy”

Another option:

Circulation activities can be broken out, with different blocking thresholds. Activities that can be broken out are:

- Checkout to the patron
- Renewal/autorenewal of an item checked out to the patron
- Checkout to the patron that fulfills a hold
- Placing a hold
- Capturing an item for the patron's hold

As an example, blocks could block a patron from checking out at the circulation desk, but NOT prevent renewals or placing holds.

This was not a unanimous Members Meeting vote, as is typical, it caused some concern. It passed 11 to 4. At the Members meeting and subsequently, concern has been expressed about the implications of the revision on service.

Discussion: Allison stated that she initially voted in favor at the Executive meeting and voted against it at the Members meeting. Allison apologized stating that is not usually how she conducts business with the group. The impact of it wasn't clear at the time and she stated her staff was concerned particularly with the equity issue and the impact on customer service. Allison stated that she is hoping that there is a way to craft the language that is more equitable.

Linda stated that she had run it by her staff and they really didn't love the first proposal. They felt that the option that every library would have local control. Linda said her staff feels that long overdue blocks is a frequent way to get items back. They felt that option 3 would be best and that every library would have local control. Another issue is that they don't always have a supervisor on hand to override.

Catherine asked for clarification as to why this came up. Ron stated that the original language raised a question from a long time circulation supervisor asking for clarification about whose items can be overridden. This was then brought to the Resource Sharing Working Group who thought that it meant that you can override your library's items but not another library's items.

Catherine asked if staff overrides now and how they do it. Allison stated that her staff would override it and still check out materials. Catherine stated that her staff get around it by putting it in as claims returned. Catherine explained her concern is that she would like to make it simple for staff. Allison expressed that she would like to have more discretion for her staff.

Allison asked if we could consider the real impact it would have on disadvantaged patrons.

Amy asked if any block could be overridden such as long overdue items and lost items.

Ron clarified that the \$50.00 includes the cost of an item and fines if applicable. Martha stated that a long overdue item would eventually become a lost item after a year.

Amy stated that we would need someone to recommend a specific language change.

Brian stated concerns that if a library is owed a book and another library continues to override, then the library that wants their item back wouldn't get it back. Brian asked if there could be a library to library agreement to reimburse.

Linda expressed concern that we would be in danger of discrepancies between who gets what kind of service in what town due to implementing that fiscally. Linda explained that her staff typically calls the other library to try and work it out.

Allison said that she appreciates the discussion with this issue and that if everyone agrees with the language, she'd be happy to table it.

Catherine asked if it is all blocks or just long overdue blocks. Allison stated that it ends up becoming the same thing where the long overdue becomes a lost item.

Brian stated that sometimes with the academic libraries, the books are very expensive and needed for students. There is more leverage with students than there is for public patrons.

Amy suggested that the Executive Board revisit the issue and form a committee to address the issue.

Amy made a motion to have Allison and Nicole work on a blocked and billing issue in the network and report back in six months with recommendations. Linda seconded. All in favor.

Catherine clarified that the current policy stands until the committee reports back.

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

6. Electronic Collections Policy

Motion: Move to recommend approval of the new Electronic Collections Policy to Members Meeting

Discussion: Ron stated that due to various publicized library discussions and incidents, NOBLE should have a policy for NOBLE managed electronic collections for NOBLE purchased items or records where NOBLE owns active items. This pertains to the OverDrive collection, but applies to all NOBLE collections. The policy would define a reconsideration review process, and limits it to residents of NOBLE communities and those affiliated with a NOBLE academic member. The policy is heavily based on Minuteman's policy. This policy would not affect or supersede individual library collection policies, and does not cover items not purchased by NOBLE funds, such as Hoopla.

Elizabeth stated that NOBLE could be subject to reconsideration requests for NOBLE purchased items.

Amy asked Ron if a reconsideration came up, would it be presented to the Executive Board and would the Board review the request and decide? Ron stated that Minuteman has a digital committee and that the Board is a suitable body to handle such requests.

Linda stated that it would be helpful to include NOBLE staff in the review and recommendation process.

Amy asked if an electronic item was challenged, would the member libraries be notified. Ron stated that he would add the following:

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to communicate the results of the review to the patron making the request and to the directors of NOBLE libraries.

Action: Catherine made motion with amendment that Ron made. Linda seconded. All in favor

7. Kovels and Overdrive Collection

Motion: Vote to approve adding Kovels antiques and collectables database to the NOBLE Overdrive collection, cost of \$2,500 for the first year to start July 1st, funds to be taken from the FY23 shared Overdrive assessment funds

Discussion: Overdrive has recently begun offering the full Kovels antiques and collectibles database. The pricing strongly favors a shared consortium purchase, at a price of \$2,500 per year compared to individual pricing for member libraries. Elizabeth did a quick search on pricing for individual libraries and found that if a few opted for this database, it would quickly exceed the cost of what NOBLE would pay for it.

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

8. Smaller Library Policies

Motion: Move to table review of the smaller library membership policies

Discussion: Ron asks that this be tabled and he asked that it be added to the agenda so that NOBLE can be ready based on some indications from outside sources who are now delaying

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

9. Authorize Working Groups for FY23

Motion: Vote to authorize three Working Groups for FY23: Electronic Resources and Database Working Group, Resource Sharing Working Group and Collection Management Working Group

Discussion: Ron stated that he recommends that we continue with the three traditional working groups; Electronic Resources and Database, Resource Sharing, and Collection. Authorization now allows NOBLE to solicit participants over the summer to be ready for the fall meeting schedule

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

10. Adjournment

Brian made the motion to adjourn at 3:15pm.