

NOBLE Executive Board Meeting via zoom

February 8, 2023

Present: Ron Gagnon, Amy Lannon, Brian Courtemanche, Allison Babin, Linda Gardener, Theresa Hurley, Catherine McDonald, Myron Schirer-Suter, Camille Hoven, Oscar Lanza-Galindo, and Jonathan Nichols.

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Amy Lannon called the Meeting to order at 2:05pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Brian made the motion to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting on 1/25/2023, seconded by Theresa. Linda abstained. All in favor.

Catherine noted there was an error in the 11/9/2022 minutes under section 6 and that it should read that Nahant has 21,000 items.

Catherine made the motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on 11/9/2022 with the changes, seconded by Allison. All in favor.

3. Treasurer's Report

Myron noted that there is nothing out of the ordinary, besides the one bill for the move.

4. Executive Director's Report

Ron announced that he is planning to retire with a target date of June 2nd. He noted that he has overseen NOBLE since March of 1988 and is coming up on his 35th year. NOBLE was the first network in Massachusetts, and Ron noted that it has been a privilege and blessing to be part of the work and to be surrounded by wonderful libraries and staff.

Ron reported that NOBLE is in a good place with the move completed and the systems moved to the cloud. He noted that next year a strategic plan will be needed, which makes getting someone new on board good timing. NOBLE is in a strong financial position and Ron is thankful for the opportunity to serve.

Amy noted that Ron has done an amazing job with everything from finances to staffing, and keeping things going during COVID-19. She noted that Ron is a quiet but strong leader, leading from in front and from behind by supporting others and helping them shine. Amy thanked Ron for his service.

OverDrive

Ron reported that January was the busiest month ever, with 48,005 checkouts. The previous busiest month was August 2022, with 44,617 checkouts. He noted that Overdrive hit the highest checkouts after the pandemic lockdown, and it is a service that continues to grow.

Ecard

Ron reported that NOBLE is still working on the E-card implementation. NOBLE met with Quipu on January 12th to go over the setup process and will meet again later this month. He noted that it will be a few more weeks before it is implemented. This was one of the FY23 objectives.

Welcome to NOBLE! Updated

Ron reported that the Welcome to NOBLE document on the Staff Information System has been updated for FY2023. This is one of the FY23 Objectives.

<https://www.noblenet.org/sis/wp-content/uploads/Welcome-to-NOBLE.pdf>

Disaster Plan Updated

Ron reported that NOBLE had been working on updating the Disaster Plan. There have been a number of changes since the last version, such as cloud hosting and a move to all-inclusive office space. They were able to eliminate parts about the server room UPS, generator maintenance, and things like plumbers and HVAC technicians since that is now the responsibility of the landlord. A copy of the updated plan was emailed to Board members.

Matomo

Ron reported that NOBLE is working on getting statistics from catalog searches using Matomo, open source web analytics software which is compatible with Evergreen. Based on free trial experimentation, it appears that Matomo has great potential for analyzing catalog searching. Ron noted that while the software is open source, there is a small charge for remote hosting. Collecting catalog use statistics will be helpful for guiding future enhancements of the catalog and improving satisfaction. This is also one of NOBLE's FY23 objectives.

Cybersecurity Consulting

Ron reported that NOBLE received a grant in the fall from the MBLC to improve cybersecurity. Half of the grant, \$12,500, was to have a consultant review NOBLE's Google Workspace setup and the Google Cloud Evergreen hosting.

NOBLE staff had a Zoom meeting with the consultant, Daniel Zborovski, on the Google Workspace installation in mid-November and are working through the recommendations. NOBLE is working on implementing multi-factor authentication for central site permissions. Ron noted that NOBLE will also be limiting the number of accounts with setup access and limiting the permissions which were set during the original trial and implementation. The use of strong passwords throughout was also recommended.

Ron reported that NOBLE staff had a videoconference with the same consultant yesterday on the Google Cloud implementation. He noted that the consultant was very impressed with MOBIUS' cybersecurity implementation, and verified their audited SOC2 compliance and controls. The consultant suggested some ways to improve cybersecurity, including the way we log in to the servers. The backups were tested and worked well, though the consultant recommended some ways to further tighten security of the backups and to speed restoring from the backups.

Apogee and Magna5

Ron reported that the networking vendor, Apogee, has been acquired by Magna5, a national managed IT services and cybersecurity firm. Ron reported that Apogee upgraded the software in the new firewalls at libraries and the NOBLE office to resolve a vulnerability overnight on December 22nd and 23rd.

As part of the firewall installation at the time of the move, NOBLE now has more secure VPN access from outside the office for systems management and troubleshooting.

Guidestar

Ron reported that NOBLE has once again earned the Platinum Transparency Seal from Guidestar for 2023. Guidestar is the charity information-sharing tool run by Candid, a nonprofit created two years ago when GuideStar merged with the Foundation Center.

Ron noted that NOBLE moved from a Bronze rating to Gold to Platinum by providing additional information about the services they provide and the constituents served. Ron noted that less than 1% of the 42,942 Massachusetts nonprofits in Guidestar have earned the Platinum seal. Ron noted that the rating could help in securing grants and related funds.

MBLC Update

Ron reported that the MBLC is pursuing possible Federal funding for telecom in public libraries, which could result in upgrading library connectivity speeds to a gig. He noted that the MBLC's FY24 Legislative Agenda

request includes a 30% increase for network funding. He noted that MBLC is soliciting priorities, particularly for new and exciting projects. He noted that the Peabody Library will be hosting the Legislative Breakfast on February 17th, and it will be a good opportunity to reach out to local legislators to support this initiative. Ron noted that while state income continues to be rosy, the Legislature has set a goal to limit the FY24 budget increase to 1.6%, not including the revenue from the Millionaires' tax.

Ron reported that the MBLC is encouraging e-rate filings for networks that don't file, which would save state money in telecom funding. Issues keeping networks from filing is poor cost/benefit results and CIPA, which would require filtering on all library workstations. The MBLC may hire a firm to do filings for the networks. NOBLE has not filed for e-rate for over a decade due to CIPA issues and the very cumbersome bureaucratic process that is often challenged.

Myron asked if the Matomo catalog statistics will be discernable at the library level. Ron said he was not certain, but that NOBLE would look into it.

5. Vote to Return Unspent Funds to Capital

Motion: Move to transfer \$10,585.33 from Telecom Upgrade Project to Capital.

Discussion:

Ron reported that the summer's telecom upgrade and cybersecurity improvements wrapped up with the installation of new equipment at NOBLE's new location in December.

A breakdown of costs and funding sources was distributed by email:

Grant Funding Sources

Network Infrastructure	76,291
Cyber Security Grant	12,500
Total Grant Funds Expended	88,791

Project Costs

Network Upgrade	100,684.67
Firewall SSO w/ Google at NOBLE	1,850.00
Total Project Costs	102,534.67
Capital Funds Needed	13,743.67
Capital Funds Approved	(24,329.00)
Return to Capital Account	(10,585.33)

Ron reported there is a surplus of \$10,585.33 that was unspent and could be returned to capital funds. The current capital account balance is \$794,625.74 and with the surplus returned the balance will be \$805,211.07

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

6. Nahant Membership Discussion

Ron reported that NOBLE has talked with Nahant many times over the years about membership, and noted that they are very small compared to other libraries. The Mass. Library System operates MassCat, a network for smaller libraries as a stepping stone ILS to facilitate smaller libraries' transition to an automated library network. MassCat operates an open source Koha system offering basic services such as an online catalog and circulation functions. Ten public libraries participate in MassCat: Nahant, a peninsula off the coast of Lynn, and nine libraries in the CW MARS service area.

Ron reported that MLS is now encouraging the ten public libraries to join their local networks to improve resource sharing. MLS will heavily subsidize network membership for these libraries for the first three years. One proposed MLS scenario would be to support libraries at a graduated level, for instance: year 1 at 50%; year 2 at 33%; year 3 at 25%, allowing the libraries to transition to full payment over time. This subsidy is dependent on the cost of network membership.

NOBLE currently has two membership options for smaller libraries. Nahant would fall into the Small Library membership category based on collection size and population, which has an annual charge of \$20,000, plus the cost of any consortium-wide electronic products, with additional costs for branches. Ron provided information on NOBLE membership pricing to Sharon Hawkes in 2015, and at that time the elementary school library functioned as a branch location. He noted that at the current rates, their annual cost to participate in NOBLE would be close to \$30,000.

Ron reported that CW MARS has a much more graduated fee structure, where a smaller library membership costs under \$5,000 per year. All of the other networks have a more graduated fee structure than NOBLE, which is relatively flat.

Ron noted that other networks offer lower pricing, but Nahant is in NOBLE’s geographic area. Ron suggested the possibility of offering an alternate option that would be more affordable. NOBLE could amend the current Associate Member Policy by increasing the maximum collection size beyond the current 15,000 items, which could lead to a cost formula as follows:

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Ongoing
Nahant assessment	\$11,669	\$11,669	\$11,669	\$11,669
SLIN	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
MLS	\$5,000	\$ 3,333	\$ 2,500	\$ 0
Net cost	\$4,169	\$ 5,836	\$ 6,669	\$ 9,169

Ron noted that this change to the Associate Member category would not impact Montserrat’s continuing membership, and could present a more affordable situation for Nahant.

Myron asked how heavily subsidized MassCat is. Ron noted that Nahant is paying between \$1,000-1,200 for MassCat right now. Myron asked who was subsidizing the cost, and Ron noted that MLS was providing the subsidy, but he was not sure about the amount. Myron noted that if that funding went away, it would force the smaller libraries’ hands. Ron noted that MLS has been clear that they do not intend to leave any libraries high and dry, and libraries can stay on MassCat if they want to. Myron noted that even if Nahant decided not to move, there is still a discrepancy between network membership models that should be addressed.

Catherine noted that if Nahant’s MassCat membership is heavily subsidized by MLS, their cost is artificially low and the real cost may not be known by people in Nahant. Ron noted that many people from Nahant already have library cards from Swampscott, Lynn, and Marblehead. Theresa noted that Lynn gets a fair share of Nahant patrons.

Allison asked if Ron could speak to the impact of Nahant’s proposed associate membership revenue for NOBLE. Ron noted that \$11,000 would be about 1% of NOBLE’s budget, and that he did not think it would be a lot of work for NOBLE to take on Nahant.

Myron asked if changing the levels of Associate Membership would impact any other libraries. Ron noted that it would not. Myron asked if there were any other implications of increasing the collection size to 25,000. Ron said it should not make any difference to other member libraries.

Amy noted that Ron had laid out the financial implications, that it was not a big burden, and it is something to consider. She noted that it goes back to thinking about the bylaws and strategic plan. Amy asked if the proposal would eventually go to a membership vote. Ron confirmed that it would.

Ron noted that there will be more back and forth with Nahant and MLS. He noted he could bring the idea to Members as a concept or keep discussion in Executive Board.

Amy noted that she thinks it is a really good idea to look at the membership options. She recommended looking holistically at membership and the options while looking toward the future and the changing needs of libraries.

Catherine asked Ron if he felt Nahant's potential membership is something that he would need to back a number into, since their ability to pay was a major consideration. She asked how important is it to membership to take on new members and what the advantages were. Ron noted that membership was somewhat geographic and that it would be simpler because many residents are already registered in NOBLE. Ron noted that he wasn't sure if Nahant would be willing to pay significantly higher membership fees, when they can stay in MassCat.

Myron noted that it was unlikely that Nahant would be able to join the EBSCO package and asked if Ron knew what their Overdrive assessment would be. Ron reported that Nahant was unable to use NOBLE's Overdrive collection for many years, but MBLC required NOBLE to open Overdrive to Nahant because state funding is involved. Ron noted that Nahant having free access to NOBLE's Overdrive collection may be another factor discouraging network membership.

Theresa noted that she believes that Nahant does not have a high school and that their students are eligible to go to Swampscott, and maybe Lynn. She wondered if there are other smaller libraries piggybacking on larger libraries. Ron noted that there were no libraries doing that that he was aware of.

Amy asked if anyone was interested in joining a committee to look at membership options. Linda volunteered. Ron noted he would be happy to collect the information and help answer questions. Myron and Theresa also volunteered for the committee.

7. Move Update

Ron reported that NOBLE successfully completed the move to the new space on Thursday, December 15th. He noted there was still one outstanding invoice for electrical work, but expected that there would be money left over to move back to capital.

NOBLE used Andresen movers and Ron noted that moving out of the old space was easier because it was located on the ground floor. The new space is on the second floor, so the move-in was slower due to the single passenger elevator, but the move was completed within the work day.

Ron reported that the Comcast and Apogee changeover went very smoothly, and that the Comcast tech arrived early and completed the installation well in advance of the 10 am cutover. Apogee was onsite at the same time removing the old networking equipment from the former location and installing new networking equipment, including a firewall and switches. Ron reported that Martha moved the proxy server and remaining equipment on Thursday morning as well.

Ron reported that NOBLE staff all pitched in and worked hard during the move. He noted that Paula did much of the move coordinating overall, in particular directing the movers. A floor plan of every space was provided as the moving company requested, but the actual movers needed to be told where to put every item. Ron noted that Paula was run ragged that day, but did a great job.

Ron reported that the new landlord, John Coughlin of Gateway Realty Trust, is very responsive and does the maintenance inside and out. Ron noted that there was a heating problem that was rectified right away. He noted that when an outlet was tripping when the copier was plugged in, the landlord fixed it on a Saturday.

Ron invited everyone to stop by if they are in the neighborhood. He noted that NOBLE plans to restore hybrid meetings in March as the weather and the virus situations improve.

Ron reported that Paula was working to get the security deposit back from Abiomed. He noted that there has been significant turnover in the upper ranks since the sale to Johnson & Johnson. Paula is also pursuing refunds for maintenance contracts on server room equipment.

Ron reported that NOBLE expended \$50,700 of the \$65,000 appropriated from capital, and that he plans to return the remaining funds at a later meeting.

8. Vote to Approve Job Descriptions Revisions

Motion: Move to approve revised job descriptions for the Executive Director, Member Services Manager, Systems Manager, Systems Support Specialist, Digital and Catalog Librarian, Database Support Analyst, Technical Support Analyst and Cataloger, Part-time as presented.

Ron reported that revising the job descriptions is a FY24 objective, but since the move to the cloud and relocation were achieved in an earlier fiscal year than originally planned, moving up the job description changes makes sense.

Ron noted that the job descriptions were last revised in the summer of 2016, and the changes are relatively minor. MassLNC went away and was replaced by the Evergreen Community Development Initiative (ECDI) based in Indiana, with references to the “Evergreen community” as appropriate. Ron noted that references to server maintenance and server room duties have been removed.

Ron distributed the revised job descriptions via email and noted the following changes:

Executive Director – new bullet #1, updated references to Administrative Assistant job title change.

Member Services Manager – added a reference to Discussion Groups.

Digital and Catalog Librarian – updated to directly supervises the part-time catalogers, previously reported directly to the Member Services Manager.

Database Support Analyst – streamlined with editing requests now going to the part-time Catalogers and documentation maintenance going to the Digital and Catalog Librarian, and two outdated items removed.

Catalogers (Part-time) – changed supervisor and added responsibility for responding to editing requests.

Systems Manager – changed to reflect remote hosting and removed website hosting for libraries.

Systems Support Specialist – reflects move to cloud hosting, adds items for OverDrive technical support to users and work analyzing website statistics including catalog usage, collection data and circulation and holding statistics (Statistics Dashboard). Parallel design with Technical Support Analyst.

Technical Support Analyst – streamlined, removed details from self-hosted implementation, removed printing notices, added items for EZproxy and Commonwealth Catalog. Greater compatibility with Systems Support Specialist job description.

PC Support Specialist -- no changes recommended.

PC Technician – no changes recommended.

Office Administrator job description was updated and approved at the August, 2022, Executive Board meeting.

Amy asked if NOBLE staff had looked at their own job descriptions. Ron noted that the management team had looked over their job descriptions at this point.

Amy thanked Ron for updating the job descriptions and noted it was hard work.

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

9. Advocacy Committee Discussion

Ron reported that Cate suggested having an Advocacy Committee discussion, but she was unable to attend the meeting. Ron reported that the Legislative Breakfast meeting for the NOBLE area will be on February 17th at 8 am hosted by the Peabody Institute of Peabody at their downtown location. Ron noted that Cate and her staff voluntarily took this on, and NOBLE will be covering the cost of the coffee and pastry. NOBLE sent a \$650 contribution to the library's foundation. Ron noted that George Comeau from MBLC will be speaking, along with legislators.

Ron noted that he and Cate had discussed the need for a NOBLE Legislative Advocacy Committee that could plan legislative breakfasts and other activities. He noted that there is a need for education because people need to know the facts so they can advocate for funding. The committee would be appointed by Executive Board and would start work in the fall each year. Ron proposed that this is something that could be authorized at the same time as the Working Groups each year.

Amy noted that she thinks it is a great idea in addition to MLA and other advocacy groups. Linda noted that she also thinks it is a great idea and hopes that Melrose can host once the library reopens. She noted that a group talking about advocacy makes talking to legislators less scary and would be helpful. Catherine noted that advocacy as a group is important, and remembered a time when all NOBLE directors met at once to advocate and how powerful it was.

Brian noted that he wasn't sure if he was supposed to go to the legislative breakfasts and advocate for funding. Ron said that it is important for academic libraries to be part of the advocacy because resource sharing requires state funding. Catherine noted that academic libraries give public libraries cred with legislators. Myron noted that Massachusetts has great statistics for ILL and resource sharing.

10. Items for March Members Meeting

Amy asked if there were items that Executive Board should prepare for the Members Meeting, since it has been a while since the last meeting. Ron said he did not think there were any action items, but would think on it.

11. New Business

Amy noted that there will need to be a search committee for NOBLE's Executive Director.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.