

NOBLE Executive Board Meeting via zoom

August 9, 2023

Present: Kathy Lussier, Catherine McDonald, Allison Babin, Linda Gardener, Theresa Hurley, Amy Lannon, Tara Mansfield, Cate Merlin, Rachel Overbeck, and Myron Schirer-Suter.

1. Call to Order/Welcome

Catherine McDonald called the meeting to order at 2:01pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Amy made the motion to approve the minutes from 5/10/2023, seconded by Theresa. All in favor.

3. Treasurer's Report

A copy of NOBLE FY23 Budget Expenditures was distributed. Myron noted that things looked good coming in at about 90%, and that there may be some small adjustments once the audit is underway.

4. Executive Director's Report

Ecard Project

Kathy reported that Martha has been working on testing for the Quipu eCard project. Once the testing is complete on the English language form, they will begin working on the translations. Feedback for the registration form will be solicited from libraries in the next week or so.

E-Rate Meeting

Kathy reported that the MBLC has hired an E-Rate consultant, Aleck Johnson, to provide E-Rate training, help desk, and related support for libraries and networks. Massachusetts libraries have been reluctant to participate in the E-rate program because of the required internet filtering. NOBLE libraries voted approximately 20 years ago to not filter the internet, but had not considered it recently. Kathy noted that the filtering technology has greatly improved and that E-rate provides discounted internet services, funding to purchase networking equipment, wiring installation, and discounted managed network services. There is a possibility of asking Comcast to give a quote separating the transport fees from the internet access fees, and then applying for the E-Rate discount on just the transport fees, but the funding amount would be very limited. Based on rough calculations, if all NOBLE libraries with a NOBLE Comcast line participated in e-rate, the discount would be about 62% or \$33,500. The consultant will work with libraries and networks in Massachusetts to find ways that they can participate in the e-rate program.

MLA Legislative Committee and eBook Legislation

Kathy reported that she is a member of the MLA Legislative Committee and participated in a meeting at the State House last month with Rep. Ruth Balsler and Rep. Mindy Domb to discuss H.3239, legislation that seeks reasonable pricing for digital books and audiobooks. This legislation is a little different from legislation filed in other states in that it removes language that touches upon copyright law and attempts to enforce more reasonable terms based on consumer protection and contract law. Kathy noted that the meeting was very positive. The MLA Legislative Committee is working to line up supporters for this fall when the Joint Committee will likely hold a hearing on the bill.

Kathy reported that she has offered to provide additional assistance to MLA Legislative Committee Chair Will Adamczyk, as his co-chair has stepped down due to a new job in Rhode Island.

Audit

Kathy reported that Paula is pulling together documents for the auditor to begin reviewing for the FY23 audit. The field visit with the auditor will likely be scheduled in September.

MBLC Grant Applications and Budget

Kathy reported that NOBLE has submitted three MBLC Grant applications for this fiscal year. Kathy noted that the deadline for the application to help support the shared Overdrive collection is August 18th, and that the application will likely be submitted by the end of the week.

The FY24 State budget has made its way through the House and Senate and Governor Healy officially signed it today. Kathy noted that the FY24 budget includes a 30% increase for line 7000-9506, which funds grants for networks.

Northeast Evergreen Summit

Kathy reported that Bibliomation has reached out to area Evergreen libraries/consortia to see if there is interest in organizing a Northeast Evergreen Summit for network staff and system supporters. There was a very positive response and a committee was formed to organize the event. Kathy noted that Elizabeth Thomsen volunteered to serve on the planning committee. Kathy noted that there was also some interest in having an Evergreen conference for library staff, as there was in the past.

5. Vote to Approve FY24 Executive and Members Meeting Schedule.

Motion: Move to approve FY24 Executive and Members Meeting schedule as presented, with the Executive Board meetings on 9/13 and 3/13 to be held in person at NOBLE.

Discussion:

A schedule of FY24 meeting dates and times was distributed. Kathy proposed that two Executive Board meetings be held in person on 9/13 and 3/13. She noted that hosting a large Members Meeting at NOBLE would be difficult due to space limitations, and hybrid meetings tend to have very small in person attendance. Kathy will ask about the possibility of in person meetings at the next Members Meeting.

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

6. Working Group/Committee Appointments and Board Liaisons

A list of members of the FY24 Working Groups was distributed. Catherine noted that the Working Groups looked good and seemed balanced, and that Executive Board liaisons were needed. Myron volunteered to be the liaison to ERDWG and Theresa volunteered to be the liaison to Resource Sharing. Amy volunteered to be the liaison to Collection Management. Kathy noted that Cate volunteered to be the liaison to the new Advocacy Committee, and that she would put a call out for volunteers later this week.

7. Vote to approve FY24 OverDrive Allocations

Motion: Move to approve FY24 OverDrive allocations as presented.

Discussion:

A proposed FY24 OverDrive allocation budget was distributed.

Kathy reported that NOBLE has a \$16,800 increase in its OverDrive budget over FY23. The proposed allocation is based on the following:

- The Simultaneous Use plans for audiobooks and magazines are the same as last year.
- The proposed allocation dropped the Kovel's subscription plan due to low usage.
- Last year, the Overdrive allocation had a separate category for MACU titles (Metered Access, Concurrent Users) because they were new and special and something NOBLE was experimenting with. Now they are mainstream. Materials with these licenses will be incorporated in purchasing for Bestsellers, Holds, etc.
- CPC (Cost Per Circ) was moved out of the Subscription Plans to a separate category The amount is increased because we are expecting to do more with this lending model for languages and other initiatives.
- The Selection categories remain the same, with increases to the allocations for each category.
- Holds: Extra copies of titles with holds (based primarily on Holds Ratio.)

- New Titles - Bestsellers: TheNew York Times bestseller list is a starting point, but we also check the Boston Globe lists and sometimes OverDrive's bestseller lists.
- New Titles - Other: These are other titles in demand that are not necessarily on the bestseller lists, including book award titles, seasonal titles, titles in the news, etc.
- Renewal Titles: This is for adding copies to titles where all the copies have expired (or are about to) expire. The top priority is titles with holds, and titles with high recent circulation.

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

8. Nahant Membership Update

Kathy reported that she sent the membership proposal to the Nahant Director, who will be retiring this fall. The Director brought the proposal to the Board, and a vote is expected at the August meeting. Kathy noted that the Board was hesitant to take on the added expense, but there is a three-year lifespan for the offer.

9. NOBLE Executive Director FY24 Goals and Evaluation Process

Motion: Move to approve the FY24 Executive Director Goals as presented.

A copy of the FY24 Executive Director goals was distributed. Kathy reported that she had four goals for her first year:

1. Engage with NOBLE libraries by visiting every library and director in the network by the end of the fiscal year.

Kathy noted that visiting libraries will offer an opportunity for directors to meet her, give feedback, and ask questions. It is also important to visit the communities the libraries serve to understand their needs and challenges.

2. Strengthen the NOBLE community through the creation of opportunities for library staff at all levels to interact with one another, to meet in person, and to have a clear understanding of NOBLE's culture, policies and procedures.

Kathy noted that over the past three years, the network has had mostly remote meetings and there has been an influx of new directors and other staff members. As a result, staff from different libraries do not know each other as well as they did in previous years, and even NOBLE staff do not know members as well. She noted that as institutional knowledge leaves the network, newer directors and staff may not be as familiar with NOBLE policies and procedures, or even know when they can reach out to the network. Kathy will focus on finding a good balance between in-person, remote, and hybrid events to help build collegiality in the network.

3. Evaluate NOBLE staffing needs

Kathy reported that NOBLE had lost two staff members over the past year, leaving one full-time and one part-time position unfilled. Kathy plans to work with the Systems Manager and Member Services Manager to evaluate the current staffing needs and determine if one of these positions should be filled, if a new position should be created, or if the current staffing is sufficient. She noted that she would like Martha and Michele to be able to focus on projects instead of help desk tasks like setting up accounts, etc.

4. Lead next NOBLE strategic planning process

Kathy reported that NOBLE's strategic plan expires in FY25, meaning that the next strategic plan should be adopted before the FY26 budget process begins. Kathy noted that with so many new directors in the network,

this will be a great opportunity for new members to have a voice in the future direction of NOBLE services. Kathy would like to hire a consultant early in the calendar year to assist with facilitating the process.

Amy thanked Kathy for sharing the goals and said they were great.

A performance appraisal form was distributed. Kathy noted that goals are usually tied to an evaluation, and this is something she is working on for NOBLE staff. She noted that the Executive Board does the Executive Director's evaluation. Kathy would like the evaluation to be goal based and offered to help develop a tool.

Amy noted that she thought Kathy's suggestion was great and volunteered to help develop the tool. She noted that having a checklist is helpful for performance improvement plans or any disciplinary action. She noted that the goals are guidelines and it is important to have flexibility.

Kathy said that she is looking at creating a continuous performance plan for NOBLE, where the check-ins would be more frequent than once a year. This would allow the goals to be adjusted if needed.

Catherine asked if anyone on the Board had experience with evaluating NOBLE's Executive Director. No one on the Board had done it before. Catherine noted that she had mixed experiences with evaluations, and pointed out that some of the assessment points about presentation seemed to be from the 1970s. Catherine said that the assessment should focus on the goals from the strategic plan, and noted that some things should not wait for an annual review.

Kathy said that she spoke with Ron, and that evaluations did not get done very often at NOBLE. She noted that the instrument for the evaluation was not useful, so the assessment became a chore. Kathy would like to see evaluations evolve into more of a conversation than a chore that has to be done at the end of the year.

Amy agreed that it was good to have goals and asked if Kathy could create a dream evaluation tool that the committee could give feedback on. She noted that Kathy has great vision and ideas. A committee was formed including Amy and Linda, and Brian will be invited to join.

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

10. NOBLE FY24 Evergreen Development Priorities

Kathy reported that NOBLE is using an older release of Evergreen, and noted that in talking with staff this was because the same functionality is not available in the new staff catalog and other redeveloped interfaces. Kathy reported that NOBLE has a budget line of \$12,000 for Evergreen development and that she would like to take a three-pronged approach: using the development budget to address bugs and missing features, using consultants and training to improve staff's ability to fix smaller bugs, and focusing on testing large features before they go into the software so that they can be stopped if important functionality is missing.

Kathy proposed adding a third Evergreen server that would act as the development server for exploring newer releases. NOBLE currently has the training server and the production server, which both have the same release loaded.

Catherine said that sounds good to her. Linda agreed and noted that all of NOBLE benefits from Kathy's knowledge of Evergreen and understanding of how the whole system works.

11. New Business

Kathy reported that NOBLE discovered that the eCard registration system is not allowing students to sign up for a public card because of the duplicate check. She noted that removing the birthdate field from the academic record would allow the registration to proceed.

Amy asked if this should be discussed in a Working Group, but it was noted that Resource Sharing only has one academic representative. Kathy will invite academics to discuss the possibility of removing the birthdate field, and if there is an operational need for the data.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:50pm.