

The NOBLE Executive Board met on Wednesday, July 29th, at 2 pm at NOBLE.

Attendees: Brian Courtemanche, Doug Rendell, Ron Gagnon, Martha Holden, Pat Cirone, Lorraine Jackson, Dennis Kelley, Linda Hummel-Shea

Agenda

1. Call to Order/Welcome – Martha Holden

The meeting of the NOBLE Executive Board was called to order at 2:07 p.m. on Wednesday, July 29th, 2009 at NOBLE by President Martha Holden.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the May 13th, 2009 were distributed to the Executive Board for review and approval.

Motion to Approve: Doug Rendell

Seconded: Lorraine Jackson

Approved unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report – Douglas Rendell

Doug and Ron reviewed the Treasurer's Report. The FY2009 Budget Expenditures as of June 30th, 2009 were distributed for review.

Doug asked - as we are at the beginning of the fiscal year - anything to be concerned about?

Ron responded:

The Nelinet/Lyrasis merger is evolving and we must keep an eye on that in terms of cataloging costs and options.

The auditor has not yet completed his work - some of the numbers may shift. The bottom line will not change appreciably, but some of the numbers may shift. Overall our finances are strong. Each year NOBLE expenditures are coming closer to matching the budget (cushions are getting thinner).

Martha Holden asked at what point do leftover funds get rolled over.

Ron responded that leftover funds will be rolled over into the fiscal 2011 operating budget, under the reimbursements section.

Martha Holden asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report; Pat Cirone made motion to approve; seconded by Lorraine Jackson; unanimously approved.

4. Executive Director's Report -- Ron Gagnon

ILL Centers - NMRLS, along with the Central, Western and Southeast regions, are planning to collectively issue an RFP for mediated interlibrary loan services for FY2011. The timetable or details are yet unknown, though they are looking to reduce costs.

FY2010 contract for \$87,500 signed and in place up from \$80,000 in recent years, originally \$87,000.

Legislative Committee - Met on Friday, still more questions than answers. State revenues haven't turned around yet, which makes any overrides questionable and continues to raise the question of 9C cuts during the year. Over two-thirds of the House has signed on to the bid to override the Governor's reduction in the Regional line item. Even with the cut, NMRLS projects budget down 3.2%; NOBLE's state subsidy down 25% to 33%, depending on how MBLC applies, tied in part to Region line for funding databases. Overrides can happen until late November.

For next year's Legislative Agenda, need to continue to ask for what is ideally needed, even though not expected - MLA's legislative consultant reports it's all about compromise and negotiation, so start with a higher, yet justifiable, number.

More effort is needed by librarians to make their case known and to prompt supporters to contact legislators.

Summer Exhibit - Latest NOBLE Digital Library, Summer, compiled by Catalog and Digital Librarian Beth Willis for first day of summer in June. Press releases sent to Lynn Item, Salem News, Globe North.

ALA - Busy conference in Chicago. Attended open source, delivery and telecommunications sessions and EBSCO advisory committee meeting. Met with VP of Liblime regarding Koha and consortia. Visited vendors including Evergreen, OverDrive and Innovative, investigated III's Encore Reporter. Ron was also the only Massachusetts person at the URSA Users Group meeting; Paul Kissman and Rob Maier did not attend ALA this year. At this point there are ongoing development issues with Innovative and URSA, and neither Evergreen nor Koha are compatible at this point either.

Doug had an open source question for Ron: is there an open source financial module? One that keeps track of library title purchases, discounts, ordering, etc. Doug was referring to financial tracking of acquired library materials, as opposed to operational office supplies.

Several of the library directors in the room affirmed that theft of restroom supplies is a problem at public libraries.

Ron responded that - based on what he saw at ALA - an open source library materials acquisitions module is in the works. It is an important issue. Ron is looking to see a system that does not lose acquisitions/financial records when there is a switchover from a proprietary automated library system to an open source automated library system.

WALDO - NOBLE is joining WALDO as a limited member in order to secure additional database discounts for members. No charge or obligation to NOBLE. WALDO is an extensive buying club based in New York state founded by Westchester academic libraries. Also support standalone Koha installations.

Record Enhancement - 3,516 bibliographic records were enhanced with table of contents information in late June. The work was done by Backstage Library Works and is keyword searchable.

MySQL/PHP Course - Elizabeth, Martha, Beth, Christine and Michele are all taking the weekly online course on website databases presented by NELINET. Susan Babb is also taking these courses.

RFID - Merrimack College's library is being strongly encouraged by their administration, due to a donation from TAGSYS, to pursue RFID. It's a complicated issue, politically and technologically, and since the system is not one of the major library systems, we need to make sure that this donation doesn't limit the future RFID paths of NOBLE, NMRLS and MVLC. The initial implementation overseen by the Electrical Engineering department seems simple and straightforward. The EE department seemed to treat this as a new thing which we probably didn't even know about, but we made sure that we demonstrated knowledge of the technology and the players. We will continue to work with the Merrimack library staff on this.

Martha: RFID can be used for self-checkout and for sorting? What is the implementation plan for Merrimack?

Ron: very basic. Check in/check out and inventory.

Martha: so essentially RFID is a wireless record.

Ron: yes.

Martha: potentially the library cards will have RFID installed, so that books and library cards can be matched.

Ron reported four Minuteman libraries (Brookline, Cambridge, Wellesley and Sudbury) have recently signed with Bibliotheca, one of the leading library and general RFID players, and Bibliotheca is also a big presence in the automated sorting area and is a contender for the state project.

Doug: of the four minuteman libraries that have signed up, any idea of the cost?

Ron: no.

Pat: may have Beverly trustee (transplant from Brookline) that may know the costs.

Martha: can RFID tags be updated or modified? Avoid re-tagging...

Ron: yes.

CD Copying - Forwarded issue to Rod Hoffman. Heard from Rod Hoffman on 7.23.09 - knew there was a library package - wanted to know if there was anything guaranteed.

Martha: replacement of CDs a premium service, not a standard service. Martha finds the premium service worth the added cost.

Pat: Children's dept. made decision not to go with Library edition, because of expense. Cheaper to re-buy ones that disappeared, rather than purchase the library edition. Adult content features multiple CDs, so it gets cost prohibitive to replace Adult, multi-CD titles.

Fire - burning toast in a toaster oven that didn't turn off caused the fire department to be dispatched on Friday morning as the smoke detector was set off. No damage, except to toaster oven which was discarded.

Vacation - Ron will be on vacation August 24th through Labor Day, mostly local with a couple of overnights away planned. Ron will send contact information to the officers and key NOBLE staff as the time nears.

Other news items from Executive Director:

Elizabeth spoke at MCCPLHEI in late June, new technology expo. Ran a good session.

Regional autosort committee (Ron participates). Meeting with vendors, and automated system vendors. Manual sorting for now seems efficient. Ron continues to be on delivery committee, which also met last month.

Martha asked for motion to approve Executive Director's report; Dennis made a motion to approve; Pat seconded.

5. Authorization of Electronic Resources and Database Working Group, System Review Working Group and Collection Team – Ron Gagnon

Some of the groups have already met this summer.

System Review Working Group (Ron) - Innovative system is 10 years old. ERDWG is focused on patron's view of system; System Review is focused on librarian's view of how a system should work, and how our policies should work with that system. With Open Source, "have it your way." As Doug will attest, you spend time getting all libraries on the same page before going forward.

E-Board must reauthorize all three groups.

Martha asked for motion to approve.

Doug - motion

Brian - second

Unanimously approved.

Martha has asked current chairs to stay on, and they have agreed. Committee membership will likely stay the same. Affirmative responses are trickling in.

6. FY2010 Executive and Members Meeting Schedule – Ron Gagnon

Executive and Members Meeting Schedules have been set for FY2009-2010:

Meetings of the Members:

9.24.09 at Beebe Memorial Library, Wakefield

10.22.09 at Beverly Farms Branch Library

11.19.09 at NOBLE

December - no meeting

January - no meeting

2.25.10 at NOBLE

March - no meeting

4.15.10 at Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill

May - no meeting

6.10.10 at Abbot Public Library, Marblehead

Executive Board Meetings (all held at NOBLE):

7.29.09

9.15.09 (budget meeting)

9.17.09 (if needed)

10.14.09

11.10.09

12.9.09

1.13.10

2.10.10

3.10.10

4.7.10

5.12.10

6.2.10

Martha asked for motion to approve meeting schedules:

Motion to approve: Pat

Seconded by: Lorraine

Unanimously approved.

7. Grant Updates – Ron Gagnon

Both grants approved by MBLC earlier in July.

Grant year starts Oct. 1st.

Open Source is the key grant - a lot of work on that all summer

Late June out to western region with MVLC and C/W MARS, met with Nora Blake of MassCat.

MassCat has had open source for a couple of years.

Doing it on a shoestring.

Got into KOHA because it had acquisitions and serials, though not much done with it.

Nora a one-person operation.

We are having a series of conference calls (three so far), more scheduled (EVERGREEN, KOHA, etc.) with open source consortiums around the country.

Evergreen consortia we've spoken to thus far seem happy with the product.

A lot of development ongoing.

Two full-day meetings next month, looking at KOHA and Evergreen, particularly focused on technical aspects.

Question to resolve: complicated; scalability, both the ability to handle needs of consortia as well as "are they big enough to handle the volume?" Clearly Evergreen is. Some question as to whether there are KOHA systems as big and complex as we are. Difficult to determine "looking under the hood."

That is the decision point. If one can't support what we actually need it to do, that system will fall by the wayside. Depending on how these calls and conferences work out, we may have a system decided by labor day. Right now, looks like Evergreen.

Want to make sure we've examined both systems fully - due diligence to NOBLE members and to the state (expecting documentation).

Downside - we're not looking to do this for another year or two, and yet KOHA may develop into something in that time.

Those are the issues we are wrestling with in the Open Source Steering Committee.

KOHA's next release promises more consortia enhancements, but the release has been pushed from summer to fall 2009. As it gets pushed out, it's beyond our decision point.

If you saw the two at booths, you'd probably pick KOHA because it's more established and looks nicer. But you want the system that actually meets your needs.

Server Grant -Written before the open source grant was written.

Open source grant is a two year model, implement by end of second year.

Server grant is one year grant.

Discussion with Paul Kissman, on steering committee for tri-network open source grant.

If we stay with Innovative, we need to replace the server.

Two year vs. one year schedule, not sure where this goes. Paul Kissman understands situation, willing to work with us.

When you get into open source (or even commercial systems), it's more appealing to have someone else host the systems. Volumes of scale. They are maintaining the computer room, generator, etc. NOBLE's computer room and support systems are aging. Eventually that's a 20,000 dollar replacement. Lease on NOBLE headquarters building is up in a couple of years. You need room and power for your server room if you move to another bldg. You need specialized space, not just easy to configure office space. Questions to be determined going forward. We may rent server space (either three networks go in together on it), or contract with Equinox or Liblime or whatever. Many options. Won't know our server needs for a while - but grants are approved.

Server is good for three to five years. We're 3.5 years in, 4.5 years in next summer. Looking to implement the open source the following summer. How much money do you want to put into a server you may use for a year and a half or two years?

Martha Holden's question: Rent server space for a bridge period?

Ron: maybe the way to go. Not sure it would save bucks with migration costs and leasing fees.

Paul Kissman and MBLC knows the entire situation and willing to support us with the big picture.

Linda: price?

Ron: looking for \$40,000 total. Noble responsible for about \$30,000. Dependent on substantial educational discount from Sun Systems. But Sun was bought out by Oracle, so don't know if that discount will be available when we go to make a server switch/decision.

8. Telecommunications Update – Ron Gagnon - see Ron's Telecomm Bluesocket/Comcast/High Use handout

Internet bandwidth continues to be an issue.

Wireless/bluesocket is an issue.

Where is this whole thing going?

Comcast connections being rolled out to the public libraries. Only cost-effective way of increasing internet connectivity/bandwidth. Whole new network installed a year ago. Capacity doubled last year. Thought we were good. Bottleneck moved to library lines. To double that capacity at the library lines would not be cost effective, and would quickly bog down. Days of private network with dedicated lines has past. Needed to build a secure data network, but now Comcast and the other ISP have build reliable networks. These networks have come a long way, in a cost effective manner. We need to ride out our three year private network contract, then - go with Comcast in the libraries.

Basically - the boxes installed/routers/controllers are not big enough to handle some of what we're doing. We are seeing possibilities with Comcast that we can take advantage of. Need for patron/library data security is paramount. SAILS on south shore is planning to get rid of dedicated line network and going to commercial network. We'll be watching their experience. SAILS expecting a cost reduction. Cash outlay: \$12,000 a month to \$4,000 a month. As you can see, if you're saving \$8,000 per month, that's almost \$100,000 per year. Some crossover outlay of cash, but potential for savings. Use high-speed, reliable data networks that are secure.

Bluesocket - cost - cheaper for Comcast than bluesocket. Invest some \$ with Atrion or other telecommunications company - extract blue sockets from network. Something NOBLE is working on. Bluesockets are at end of life anyway. Public wireless answer for that (Low cost Comcast).

A lot of telecommunications issues - great promise for saving money and maintaining service. State has its own telecomm initiatives, but right now we can do our own thing.

I think we've got some real alternatives - two big projects - same timetable as Open Source. Will need some planning (telecomm). A few years left on our Paetec contract - gives us some time to plan things out. Start looking at e-rate about a year from now. Comcast = e-rate not an issue. Other providers = e-rate is an issue.

Other networks trying this out - we're watching them (SAILS). System may be hosted somewhere else; network may be hosted somewhere else. It's all coming together into a new model. In five years we'll have a new model that's different than the model we've had for the last 30 years.

9. Budget Outlook – Ron Gagnon

Specific concerns for 2010/2011:

Income and expenses should be nearly as predicted.

The thing Ron sees as unplanned and we need to discuss: we need to invest money into planning for new system, and money for additional technical staff.

Planning and design of next system. In the past, relatively clear - you buy a new system out of the box and use it.

Our Innovative system cost 1.1 million dollars ten years ago, including central server.

We're not looking at that kind of investment again with open source. We do need to look at an investment to get the new system off to a good start. Need to put money into staffing for planning and implementation. Bridge money - hope to see reduction in maintenance costs paid to an outside vendor. You can't wait until you turn on the new system to hire the new staff. You need them beforehand for planning, testing, implementation. We need a bridge plan wherein we fund new permanent position(s).

Some talk - each consortium would have its own technician, who would work together.

We need to come up with a bridge plan. Need details. Discuss with other networks. Grant investigation proceeds, may come about. When does this come into play? End of 2010? 2011? It's on the horizon.

We have \$1.2 million in capital right now. We could spend that much cash again if we were to buy a new commercial system. There's potential to fund that open source position temporarily out of capital, until we can shake some other costs (Innovative maintenance).

Other things for 2011:

State funding - cuts hit us in 2011.

Additional 9C cuts potential. You don't get all the money up front - payments throughout the year - money in jeopardy.

Dennis: is NOBLE in jeopardy of losing any NOBLE member libraries?

Ron says that so far no word of any NOBLE members falling away.

Looking ahead further, to 2012...Ron says:

Great opportunity to look at telecommunications system (#8). see above...

Year for the new library system.

Should save some money in maintenance. May still be some opportunities for investments in software additions, particularly the first year.

A transition year.

Real potential for telecommunications savings.

Martha had a question: would new tech support staff be writing code or making recommendations?

Ron: Both.

That's the budget outlook. Great possibilities, particularly as we get to 2012. It may a bit rocky as we transition, but NOBLE Inc. is in a good spot, given that there's almost 2 million set aside (675,000 contingency, \$1.2 million in capital). NOBLE is strong. We may need to put some of that into the works as bridgework.

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn forwarded by: Doug

Lorraine seconded

Approved unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:53 p.m

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Brian Courtemanche