

Executive Board Meeting - Feb. 11th, 2010

Present: Myron Schirer-Suter; Ron Gagnon; Doug Rendell; Karen Pangallo; Martha Holden; Dennis Kelley; Pat Cirone; Linda Hummel-Shea; Brian Courtemanche.

Special Guest: Jeffrey Klapes

Call to Order – Martha Holden

Meeting was called to order at 2:11 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – Ron Gagnon

Motion to approve: Myron

Seconded: Pat

All approved.

Treasurer's Report – Doug Rendell

- A. Monthly budget report – we are on track with the budget to date.

Motion to Approve: Dennis

Seconded: Karen

All approved.

- B. Vote to Move Earned Interest to Capital: \$12,374.99

Motion to Approve: Brian

Seconded: Myron

All approved.

- C. Consideration of Diversifying Investments: Stock Fund -

NOBLE has two one-year CDs. CD interest rates are yielding poor rate of return. \$1.2 million in NOBLE capital account. Take 5% of that and invest in something with a higher rate of return (mutual funds)? Where we are "isn't really doing anything."

Karen: likes the idea.

Dennis: is it a front-loaded or no-load fund? Ron does not think that it is an up-front load.

Martha: wishes we were not so hurried. Can we afford to lose any of our money? We need weigh-in from the member libraries, as it is their money, too.

Ron: NOBLE money market account: pays 1.25%.

Pat: could we re-up the CD for a lesser amount, put the remainder in a money market account? Would give us research time.

Martha: make sure the members are behind this.

Ron: Some milestones: we've committed \$67,000 to Evergreen Project. Telecomm equipment grant: NOBLE share \$25,000 (approximate). Telecomm would be in the spring, so it is a year away. Evergreen is the next milestone.

Dennis: we're losing money keeping up with the status quo, because inflation is eating away gains.

Pat: should we talk percentages?

Dennis: what about bond funds?

Doug: one of the issues is, what we've done in the past is just roll it over; no problem with that. Bringing it to the Board, the issue is, any member of the Board can veto this maneuver. What we are hearing today is that it is worth exploring. We have a responsibility to see if we can do better. Let's not make a decision right here, right now. We take this seriously, and the trust of the contributing members. 5% is a reasonable start.

Ron: CD will roll over in a few days if we don't do anything.

Linda: run it by the members, but don't get tied up in the details.

Martha: I'm in favor of going forward with a recommendation of 5%. Ask for vote from membership. Renew the CD minus the 5% and move that 5% into another, more aggressive account.

Myron: even if the membership votes it down, we hold on to the 5% and move it back into the CD.

Motion to approve: Brian

Seconded: Pat

All approved.

Executive Director's Report – Ron Gagnon – see Handout B

ALA – Seven NOBLE staff members attended Midwinter ALA in Boston last month. Sessions run by Equinox on the Evergreen system in the exhibit hall were quite useful and timely. Though there was no official Evergreen user meeting, Elizabeth, Martha and Ron attended an informal meeting of several upcoming Evergreen users that included two Equinox VPs. Equinox is the prime support company for Evergreen.

EBSCO – Ron is meeting on Friday with EBSCO representatives John Henderson and Ann Murdock. Expect to start contract renewal discussion and hear more about Time and Forbes exclusives. NOBLE

staff working on implementation of mobile app, will be discussing at upcoming Reference Roundtable. Our NOBLE/EBSCO contract is up on June 30th, 2010.

OverDrive E-books – Elizabeth is working with OverDrive on an opening collection. Ron is working to revise the PR materials, and we expect e-books to be available in early March. Gloucester and Peabody have recently contributed funds to the collection. Ron wrote a letter to NMRLS thanking them for donation and noting the purpose (e-books), which was noted at NMRLS Executive Board January meeting.

E-Rate: All forms for FY2011 have been filed and acknowledged.

NMRLS ILL Contract – At a meeting attended by Ron, the NMRLS board voted to approve the ILL contract at their January meeting. The hitch is that the transition team is considering whether the Andover work should instead go to existing regional interlibrary loan centers in central and western region to provide opportunities for regional staff and retain funding within regional system. Answer is expected in a month or two, enough time to ramp up service.

Telecomm Equipment Grant Project

Issues:

Switching to Internet connectivity exclusively would save large sums of money and provide better throughput.

Need VPN security software to send unencrypted Millennium information, passwords, etc. over the Internet.

Our current six year-old routers are incapable of VPN encryption.

Our current routers will soon be end-of-life, which could become a maintenance and security issue.

Our central site firewall is also end-of-life.

Proposed Solution:

Apply for LSTA grant to MBLC to:

Replace public library routers with new generation Cisco routers capable of secure VPN.

Provide secure VPN clients to academic and special libraries to connect over their institutional Internet connection.

Replace central site firewall with newer model which will handle secure VPN clients.

Benefits:

Better throughput for staff workstations in most cases.

Lower cost for telecommunications.

Lower cost for equipment maintenance (twelve fewer sets of equipment to maintain, 21 instead of 33).

Caveats:

Greater reliance on institutional networks beyond our control.

Greater responsibility to NOBLE staff for outage resolutions?

Project would be implemented Spring 2011. Open to alternate vendors.

Motion to approve concept of grant project and forward it to members meeting, pending final financial figures: Linda.

Seconded: Doug

All approved.

MassLNC Update – Ron

Activity on this project is picking up. Kathy Lussier has signed on as project leader. Key staff from three networks are now holding monthly meetings. Weekly Monday afternoon phone calls between networks to keep tabs on the project. Kathy L. met NOBLE staff earlier today to learn more about NOBLE and who does what. Background, not specifics at this meet & greet. Ron felt that it was a good meeting. NOBLE has been in touch with the King County library system in Washington State, which is ahead of us on the Evergreen path. They too are coming from a Millennium system. Martha has the Evergreen system here for testing: finding great flexibility in the system. At this point, it is a matter of testing out the system. Experimental set up, comparing notes between the three networks. Two surveys are out right now: ERWG and System Review. Next couple of monthly meetings will focus on system holds: what are we looking for, and how do we want holds to operate? Thinking about hierarchies: the system accommodates branches – so – what is the best way to set up a hierarchy? As new system enhancements are developed, we must keep up with these developments.

Update and Discussion on State, Region, and Local Funding Situations: Ron, Jeff

Jeff –

Will inform us as much as confidentiality allows.

Good news – end of this month, process should be complete. Still many questions to be answered. Tough to make decisions when you don't have all the questions answered.

28% cut is driving the matter. Through the Fall, MBLC met with staffs of various regions and executive boards. In mid-December, big meeting to strategize and come to a consensus on the general form of the new entity. December meeting looked at a number of scenarios: three regions, two regions, etc. Focus on geography or other factors? MVLC restricted the group to think of no more than three entities

coming out of this. Single entity with multiple locations, chosen. Retaining a multi-region structure is no longer tenable. Instead, a statewide organization. Raised the question: aren't we just creating a redundant bureaucracy? Why not just rely on MBLC, a statewide structure? It is a legal/structural thing: we need a non-profit organization that is structured and governed similar to the regions. The specifics of this new agency is where the transition team comes in: made of three executive board members composed of the three regions, plus officials from MBLC, tasked with fleshing out the details. Goal: end of February, the overall final recommendation will be formulated – a merger document – to send to MBLC for approval. Then it goes to the executive boards of the different regions, then back to MBLC for final approval in June. Intent: start this in July 2010. Many transitional details yet to be determined.

Initial budget

Governance (15 member executive board, probably 2 people from each of the existing regions, plus three at-large members from each region).

Core services: delivery; statewide databases; mediated interlibrary loan; training and consulting services.

How swiftly this moves depends on the cooperation and swiftness of each concerned region, the MBLC, etc. The timeline is very amorphous at the moment.

Some of the existing regions may exist after July 1st to aid in transitional issues.

Regional Reference Centers:

Existing regions must make decisions until this is all solid.

Governor's budget has language in it that will no longer require the funding for regional reference centers. This year, given the dire financial situation, it is less likely that this will exist. Ultimately there will no longer be an Andover regional reference center. ILL centers? Not likely to be an in-house service; the new entity will contract out for ILL service.

Mission Statement is in place and on the MBLC website. Rough idea of the governance system in place, along with core services, draft budget, and draft plan of service. Much of it is focused on the transition period. The new entity, once instituted and stable, can make long-term directional decision.

Ron: what would happen if there was level funding for the regions?

Jeff: interesting question. Rob Maier spoke recently to the MLA legislative committee (Ron is on this group). It is highly unlikely that the current regional system would stay in place if money were to flow back to the regions.

Martha: where is the money being saved?

Jeff: staffing. Doing things on a larger scale also saves money (statewide databases, ILL delivery, etc.)

Materials cooperative purchasing program would stay in place.

Doug: By having a central office, will there be satellite locations? Doug wonders where the savings would be in that model – it seems like it is replicating the current structure. Would now be back to square one?

Jeff: good observation. People value the “local connection” they’ve enjoyed with their regional staff members. We want to be able to preserve that, but are additional physical locations cost effective? Satellite offices may be “virtual,” not physical satellite locations costing office space.

Doug: regarding delivery...do they expire simultaneously or at different times?

Jeff: I don’t know...my guess is the latter (different times).

Doug: consistency of reliable delivery is a major matter to all our libraries.

Linda: staffing...who stays, who goes? What’s the decision process there?

Jeff: I don’t know – this has yet to be resolved. These issues have been discussed with lawyers, but have yet to be resolved.

Doug: how many people affected?

Jeff: a good number of people will be out of work. There are a good number of qualified people aware of the situation and are now job-hunting, even if they would have ultimately been retained.

Official name: Massachusetts Library System (MLS).

Doug: as far as the politics of this matter, the regions really took the hit. Is there a sense that the State House did not really know what the regions were doing?

Jeff: the driver of this was the Governor’s office – he instituted cuts across every state agency. From there, the MBLC decided where to apply the cuts. Just not that many places to apply cuts.

Regional structure is 15 years old...it is time to assess, evaluate, etc. regardless of financial and state mandates. Massachusetts is a physically tiny state, and very parochial. We are not Texas.

Bottom line: we’ll continue to meet over the next couple of weeks, and should have something definitive by early March.

Issues affecting networks are being brought up in these meetings.

Ron: relationship between networks and regions, since inception, has always been a little awkward.

Jeff: Agree - this present situation highlights that awkward relationship.

Linda: despite statewide fiscal situation, it does seem to make sense to re-evaluate the current model and move towards something else, regardless of the funding issue.

Jeff: as nice as it is to have close-by, regional structures, in this day and age, it does not make sense.

Linda: how are the regional staffs doing?

Jeff: they are soldiering on, despite all the ambiguity.

Ron: overall statewide budget situation. In governor's budget, networks are level-funded.

General financial/budget discussion – how are individual libraries doing?

Furlough discussions.

Motion to adjourn: Doug

Seconded: Linda

Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Courtemanche
Clerk