NOBLE Executive Board Meeting
March 8, 2017 @ NOBLE

Present: Ron Gagnon, Kathryn Geoffrion-Scannell, Linda C. W. Gardener, Diane Wallace, Brian Courtemanche, Patti Rogers, Elizabeth Thomsen, Martha Driscoll, and Myron Schirer-Suter.

1. Call to Order/Welcome
   The Meeting was called to order by Vice President Linda C.W. Gardener for Alan Thibeault at 2:02 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

   Kathryn moved to accept the November 2016 minutes, Patti seconded, all approved.

3. Treasurer's Report

   No questions for the treasurer.

4. Executive Director's Report

   Despite four months without an Executive Committee meeting Noble staff have been very busy behind the scenes.

January Upgrade – Our January Evergreen upgrade – servers, database software and applications software –went off very well due to the planning, dry runs and testing done by NOBLE staff, particularly Systems Manager Martha Driscoll who had been working on the upgrade since summer.

The upgrade was our biggest challenge in almost five years. We simultaneously upgraded the hardware, the Evergreen software, the underlying database software the indexing method and the bibliographic indices. We moved up two versions of Evergreen and three versions of the database software. The new hardware on average has double the number of CPUs, double the RAM and takes advantage of new solid state drive technology, replacing old disk drives.

Member Services Manager Elizabeth Thomsen and her staff also worked to take advantage of the upgrade, which required reindexing the bibliographic data, to make catalog usability improvements including a synonym list (for entries like 19th and nineteenth), a new genre index, a separate publisher index (taking publisher out of the general keyword index) and a change in the treatment of words with apostrophes. A citation display has also been added to records.

Testing by Kathy Lussier before and after showed a search speed improvement in the catalog of over 50%, due largely to the upgrade in the database software and the new solid state drives. Searches that averaged 18.4 seconds on the old system now take only 8.8 seconds on the new system, with the biggest improvement coming in broad searches like "history" and "dogs".

There are also two improvements to the patron opt-in checkout history, and a new option that allows patrons to opt-in to getting their receipts sent by e-mail.

Getting to the higher software levels puts us in line for upcoming improvements which should further improve throughput and usability.

Some issues were worked through, including sessions freezing which were connected to staff logging in with unexpected characters, like spaces, in the staff login. A fix was developed by

Equinox quickly once identified by Michele Morgan to remedy the issue. Tweaks were also made to the SIP software which was causing problems for remote systems including the Optima sorter and Reading automated material handler for checkins.

Equinox Non-Profit Status – Equinox, our system support vendor and major MassLNC development vendor, has converted to be a non-profit corporation as of the first of the year.

Based on a MassLNC meeting with President Mike Rylander on February 1st, we learned that no major operating changes are planned. When a for-profit, surpluses were invested back into the company, and that will continue. Equinox feels that it will be a better fit for their customers, who are either governments or non-profits, and could allow them to take advantage of grant funding for a large project, though that does not seem to be a focus. It also prevents them from being a takeover target.

The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss development projects in the pipeline, particularly improvements to catalog searching focusing on the item display, which is presently the bottleneck.

EBSCO Grant – Work on the grouping formats and editions functionality has been completed and will be in Release 2.12, which we will load probably in June. This is the work that was funded by the$10,000 grant from EBSCO, with programming work done by the MOBIUS consortium in Missouri and by Equinox. MOBIUS will be hosting the 2018 Evergreen conference.

Amazon Smile -- $60.25 donation through Amazon Smile program for October through December, 2016.

Legislative – I spoke in December at the Legislative Breakfast in Peabody, explaining the role of networks.

Yesterday I attended Legislative Day at the State House and met with Rep. Speliotis and his staff, participated in a meeting arranged by Sharon Gilley with her Senator Jason Lewis and Representative Paul Brodeur, along with librarians from Melrose, Reading and Malden (including Linda) and dropped a packet with an aide to Senator Joan Lovely..

MBLC Strategic Planning Process – I participated in an all-day retreat in late January that is part of the MBLC's process for their new strategic plan. The consultant, Alan Brickman, had sent out a general survey that garnered 337 responses, as well as conducting more in depth interviews with a cross section of librarians. Participants in the late January session included reps. from MLS, the networks, MLA, MSLA, Worcester library for the vision-impaired, two public library trustees and a former president of the Reading Friends.

Noteworthy red flags were a lack of strong support for the statewide databases and especially the statewide ebook collection, concern that the usage and value did not match the cost, and to a lesser extent, programs for trustees. A follow up meeting was held on March 1 with the networks and MLS on the ebook issue, which reportedly included a discussion about overlap between network efforts and a need to reexamine the structure and mission of the CEC to make it more responsive to the needs of the state.

I also participated in a follow-up meeting with Brickman for network administrators on Friday, going over relationship with MBLC and network needs.

Conferences – Elizabeth attended the ALA Midwinter conference in Atlanta in January.

Both Elizabeth and I will be attending the 2017 Evergreen International Conference in Covington, Kentucky, just across the river from Cincinnati, April 5-8, and the ALA Annual conference in Chicago, June 23-26. We are both on panels as speakers at the Evergreen conference. Probably also attending Mass. Library Association conference.

Statistics Dashboard – Added more patron data, breakdown of cardholders by decade of birth. Some typo dates in the results, will provide way for libraries to track these down and edit.

Bug Squashing – NOBLE staff continue to participate in efforts to find and fix bugs in both the new web staff client and Evergreen in general. Last week was a general Evergreen Bug Squashing Week and NOBLE staff had a total of 12 contributions, from Martha, Michele and Christine, and Kathy Lussier had 53. The totals include indentifying, testing and fixing bugs. The overall community total was 245.

Holds and Circulation Meetings – We held our annual Holds meeting last month.   Some statistics from the meeting:
- 25% of total annual circulation – 28.5% of desk transactions
- 819,390 within NOBLE in past twelve months:
    - 375,135 network transfers
    - 444,256 within a library

Delving into holds, and the abilities to mine the Evergreen data, has led us to review problem areas in the process, which we will be discussing at the upcoming Circulation Roundtables tomorrow and Tuesday, and at Members next week, such as:
- over 3,000 items in the system that have had the In Transit status for more than a year,
- Almost 35,000 items in the system are listed as "missing"
- Over 1,500 "hopeless" holds, holds with no viabile copy to fill it

We are now able to provide better tools and lists for libraries to track down these issues and improve service.

Health Insurance Costs – We have been notified of a 13% increase in our health insurance rates for the year starting on April 1. Our agent is reviewing alternatives to Tufts, our current provider, but Blue Cross is 25% higher for the individual plan and Harvard Pilgrim does not offer a similar plan. We currently have four single and one family plans, plus two Medicare extension plans, which are priced separately.   It's already a not great plan, with an up-front deductible and a monthly cost of about $800 for a single person and $2,300 per month for a family plan, of which NOBLE pays 60%, getting that down to about $480 and $1,365 for a family plan.

5. Personnel Policy Life Insurance Update

We changed our life insurance and long-term disability provider from Lincoln to Guardian, effective January 1, lowering our monthly cost by about 40% while increasing the general life insurance benefit from $15,000 to $25,000. Need to reflect that in our Personnel Policy.

Benefits will still decrease at ages 65 and 70, and we have one employee beyond each milestone. To avoid medical questionnaires and possible disallowing, it was more beneficial to keep existing 65+ employees at the old benefit rate, of $9,750 and $7,500 respectively, which is slightly lower than the reduction equation in the new policy.

I propose that we replace the current more specific language for the 65+ categories to read,

6.2 Life Insurance

NOBLE provides each eligible full-time employee with a collective term life insurance policy with $25,000 of coverage.

Life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance benefit will decrease when an employee reaches age 65 and again at age 70.

Employees may elect not to participate in the life insurance program by signing a statement waiving coverage.

Motion to accept the recommended change of language by Brian, seconded by Kathryn and approved by all.

6. Privacy Policy Update

Motion to table by Diane, seconded by Brian and all in favor.

7. Patron Alerts and Messages Policy

In Evergreen staff client, there are several places to put patron alerts and messages that appear in different places at different times and are confusingly named.

There are more different kinds of information being tracked as well.

We have worked with the Resource Sharing Working Group to clarify and recommend the following policy.
A motion was made to approve the policy recommendation, with some wording changes, by Myron, seconded by Patti and all in favor.

8. Network Transfer Policy Revision

A minor change to include the new uniform network transfer loan period was motioned for approval by Kathryn, seconded by Brian and all in favor.

9. Disaster Plan Review

Based on a template from MBLC.

10. Other Business

Martha Holden has been serving as the Executive Board liaison to the Resource Sharing committee and will need to be replaced. After a brief discussion Myron made a motion to nominate Brian C. to the position. Kathryn seconded, all approved.

11. Adjournment at 3:56 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Wallace
Clerk