

Bright Starts Cooperative Early Learning Centre Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 7:30pm

Chairperson: Kennedy Sherwood

Meeting by Videoconference

In attendance: Karen Hinnigan, Stacey Reid, Kennedy Sherwood, Jennifer Bleakney, Michelle Bauer, Angie Docking, Mariam Hassan, Emily Kozlowski, Robilyn Vanos, Edwin Ng

Regrets: Julia Carvalho

Meeting called to order at 7:33pm

Motion to approve the agenda

- Moved by Robilyn
- Seconded by Angie
- All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions
- Motion carried

Motion to approve October minutes

- Motion by Michelle
- Seconded by Mariam
- All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions
- Motion carried

Immunization Disclosure Policy

- Policy updated to reflect the need for unvaccinated staff to rapid tests from 2x to 3x per week.

Motion to approve the revised immunization disclosure policy

- Moved by Mariam
- Seconded by Jennifer
- All in favour, no opposed, no abstentions
- Motion carried

Presentation - Treasurer's Report + Recommendations

- Scenario 1 – 5% increase for families.
 - Increasing salaries to match competitor salaries in the Region (pay equity), not cost of living increase. Also propose to add an extra day of vacation based on years of service; cost of that is \$10K but will retain talent and save us money on hiring/recruitment.
- Scenario 2 – 6% increase for families.
 - Cost of living increase + performance bonus (merit raise). Performance bonuses are pulled out of a separate pot - Finance committee determines what that pot is, and then money is distributed at three different levels (last year \$22K pot was used for the performance bonuses & it came out of last year's surplus). Could also consider giving a COVID bonus as no pay equity involved in this scenario.
- Scenario 3 – 6.5% increase for families.
 - Cost of living increase, pay equity and increased vacation days in relation to years of service. This would bring us to around the regional average for pay, even a tiny bit higher.
- All scenarios introduce a new discount for staff with children enrolled at Bright Starts (to encourage staff retention + incentivize staff to come back after parental leaves).
- The Finance committee recommends Scenario 3.

Questions & discussion on Finance committee scenarios:

- Is there a cost analysis available on recruiting vs. retaining? Stacey – no, but we know that new grads are being offered higher salaries within the Region, so recruitment is challenging.
- Is a 5% or 6% increase to families typical? Stacey – we're usually around 5% on average; Michelle – last year, we did a 4% increase.
- With the pay equity scale implemented, would there be a lot of wage gaps closing? Michelle – yes, it would increase salary for some staff, but not a lot of people.
- Were there any scenarios where staff discounts weren't considered? Emily – no, as it was a significant part of our retention strategy; Michelle – the discount was not significant in money savings, so we included it in all. Also not guaranteed that those discounts will be taken. Stacey - biggest discount is on infants; but most staff are taking 18-mos mat leaves and not needing infant space. Emily - \$17,000 is estimated cost of childcare discount IF all slots are taken. Conservative estimate based on patterns of educators taking 18-mos.
- Is the fee increase based on the previous year's rate? Michelle – yes, more centres in the Region are becoming private centres and their costs are higher than Bright Starts. Hoping that the Region will help with affordability as well.
- Stacey notes the Region did release a memo where they state they are closely monitoring Ontario's negotiations with the federal government to see if we can implement a national childcare plan; confident we will see something in 2022. Region is very concerned with affordability... funding can change the landscape of that largely for families.
- Worried about the sustainability of the budget - is passing this type of budget (deficit) normal for a business? Michelle – our auditor thought 4-mos would be enough for operating costs, so that's healthy. It may be a deficit budget, but we do have the money sitting in our operating fund.
- Are any of these changes reversible? Michelle - Pay equity + cost of living increase is not reversible and that's what is affecting the deficit most. Previous boards always kept up cost of living raises so we wanted to continue that trend.
- Can you reconfirm the surplus number for October 2021? \$266K surplus for 2021; expected deficit \$22K. Surplus for 2021 covers the 2022 deficit - understanding the surplus for 2021 is an important piece of the puzzle. \$264K surplus for October.
- Emily notes that if we follow through with these fee increases, we'll be in a position of surplus in the future. Investments we're making this year are not as significant in following years (i.e pay equity) so the year over year increase is not the same as it is this year. Bright Starts has capacity to invest this year and will be in a solid position for the future years. Also hopeful that the affordable funding (from Region, federal government) will come through and will make a significant difference in the future.
- The Board congratulates Michelle + the whole committee on great work.
- Michelle thanks everyone for their help in putting together the budget.

Motion to adopt Scenario 3 as presented* by the Finance Committee as the BSCELC 2021 budget.

- Moved by Michelle
- Seconded by Emily
- All in favour, no objections, no abstentions.
- Motion carried.

*Infant - from \$1684 to \$1793 (difference of \$109/m); Toddler - from \$1277 to \$1360 (difference of \$83/m); and Preschool - from \$1055 to \$1124 (difference of \$69/m).

Hours of Operation

- Stacey has sent out a survey to parents; has received 50% in responses to date but survey was only sent out yesterday.
- Big takeaway so far is families are okay with the hours of operation so far; some families requesting a later care window.

- Stacey's suggestions: move to 8-5 hours of operation; and look at each individual program and see what their families are requesting. Each care window could possibly expand or stay the same based on those responses.
- Once Stacey will analyze data, she will put together her recommendations for the Board. Will do an email vote for hours of operation before the next meeting.
 - How would the 8-5 option work? Would anyone be able to have their child there between 8-5? Stacey - yes. We'd still ask families to keep the care window if they can.
 - Would you need staffing for this change? Stacey - yes, we would need extra staffing. Infant room parents could drop off in their room to alleviate social distancing. We can't mix cohorts inside but can outside so at the end of the day, having as many cohorts as we can outside will help to lengthen the care window.

Regional Funding Initiatives 2022

- Stacey is expecting the base incentive funding to increase, so should help our budget
- Not expecting to get support for anymore covid related expenses - wage enhancement, repair and maintenance funding would remain
- Stacey will provide info on the new quality initiatives funding in January and she is closely monitoring the federal \$10/day child care plan provincial negotiations.
- Bright Starts has had an additional staff resignation, and long-term leave.

New business for next meeting

- Change December meeting to December 7 if needed

Good news roundtable

- Michelle's son transitioned to a big boy bed and he hasn't gotten out of his bed once!

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

- Moved by Robilyn
- Seconded by Michelle
- All in favour
- Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm