

## Bright Starts Cooperative Early Learning Centre Board Meeting

Tuesday, September 20, 2022, 7:30pm

Chairperson: Robilyn Vanos

Videoconference

In attendance: Karen Hinnigan, Stacey Reid, Angie Docking, Edwin Ng, Emily Kozlowski, Robilyn Vanos, Avery Au, Lula Woldemariam, Sarah Wyttsma, Eleanor Doe, Michelle Bauer, Mariam Hassan

Regrets: Jessica Achebe, Julia Metelka, Anthony Oyeyi

Meeting called to order at 7:32pm

Motion to approve the agenda

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

Motion to approve the August minutes

- Moved by Eleanor
- Seconded by Lula
- All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions
- Motion carried

Executive Director's report

Financial

- BSCELC has been officially approved to be part of the CWELCC!
- Allocation around \$360K (for April – December 2022) and is set to be deposited by the end of September
- Stacey has let families know that we've been approved within the 30-day timeline and the Centre is set to reduce fees October 1<sup>st</sup> by 25%.
- Currently working through the April-Sept rebates for enrolled families; Stacey has reached out to CHILDCAREPRO (fee collection platform) to see if they could deposit credits instead of having rebates issued in-house. She is waiting to hear back and will keep the Board posted.
- There have been a few shifts in CWELCC guidelines (to encourage more wide-spread participation), so Stacey has removed a few items in our budget that are not funded under the updated funding model.
- BSCELC's current registration fee is considered a "non-base" fee under the CWELCC funding model. As our registration fee is currently \$500, Stacey notes she spoke to Emily about reducing it to \$200 in the future to help match the fee reduction (as registration fee will eventually eclipse a month's worth of childcare fees).
- We have now finished up at Credit Union and have transferred most of our assets into RBC account. We will keep it open until May 2023 in case we need to access anything for the year-end audit.
- Robilyn thanks Stacey & Emily on behalf of the Board for all their hard work on the CWELCC funding application.

Health & Safety:

- BSCELC has had 1 COVID case since last meeting in August

- There are some changes to the Ontario COVID screening tool; she has informed families of these changes + encourages them to continue screening every day (i.e., no more 5-day isolation period regardless of immunization status). Messaging also included that we hope families will stay home when sick, and that children can come back 24-hours after improving symptoms.
- Stacey notes that it's likely time to retire our pandemic policies and use them as a basis to develop revised health & safety policies with our learning from the pandemic; Stacey will work on them over the next month and will bring them forward to the Board at the next meeting.

#### Enrollment:

- September enrollment is at 100% in infant, 97% in toddler, and 95% in preschool
- October enrollment is at 100% in infant, 98% in toddler, and 95% in preschool

#### Staffing/programs:

- Good news – two educators have welcomed healthy babies over the past month!
- BSCELC had a lot of new children start this month and it was nice to have families come visit in advance; some rooms needed additional staff support, but most are settled now.
- Preschoolers are interested in having a field trip (i.e., to pumpkin patch, tree farm) and the Google poll sent to families was very positive; Stacey/Karen now looking to book
- Field trip is not mandatory, there will be staffing at the Centre (may need to combine cohorts)
  - Will families have to cover the cost? Stacey – no, there is a budget line for field trips.

#### Other:

- New custodial staff have begun and Stacey and Karen are very pleased with the results. We won't see the increased cost just yet as the first bill comes in December due to quarterly billing
- BSCELC is bringing back photo week the week of October 3rd. There is no pressure for parents to have their kids pictures taken or to buy photos.
- Unfortunately, the staff appreciation dinner thrown by the Region was cancelled, so Stacey is recommending the \$1.5K the Board approved to be put toward their staff party (@ Bingemans). The meal is close to \$60/person so this extra funding would help cover most of this cost. The Board will wait and vote on this in October.
- In a Finance committee meeting, it was noted that maybe we need a strategic planning committee to discuss expansion
- Stacey has had UW's Faculty Association reach out asking about expansion as there isn't enough space for faculty.
  - Does Bright Starts want to explore expansion? Stacey – yes, as there is funding available in 2022 and likely in other years as Ontario is interested in creating new spaces
- Stacey is enthusiastic about this and invites the Board to consider this possibility, with the first step potentially being to form a committee
- One consideration she would want to explore is whether we want to partner with UW in the way we've been doing to date (i.e., renting space from UW)
- Stacey notes we'd need to touch base with the Region on any of our expansion plans too (i.e., the challenge with creating priority spaces for UW affiliated families with public money)
  - Would this funding change our priority current (UW-staff, faculty)? Stacey – the next four years are transitional, so this is something we'd need to think about moving forward. There are other childcare centres in the Region that also have priority spaces for Laurier and private companies.
- Board is enthusiastic about exploring forming a strategic planning committee to explore the idea of expansion
  - Do you have any resources on how expansion could be possible? Stacey - auditors + Region (looking at funding, geographic areas)

- What do you envision the duties to be of a committee? Stacey - looking at partnership with the Faculty Association, putting together the budget, exploring land options
- Stacey recommends a committee could be formed in January after she has had some initial discussions with the Region.
- Avery notes that the mandate for this committee could be educational so that all Board members remain up to date + succession planning for the Centre team + the Board.

#### Treasurer's report

- August's highlights – net loss is \$-892; mostly tracking to our budget (aside from an employment matter that impacted April)
  - Will this budget adjust for the new janitorial cost? Emily - no, can't change halfway through the approved budget. Will consider adjustments to the 2023 budget based on the janitorial costs.

#### Investment presentation

- Currently have \$600K sitting in chequing account
- BSCELC has had existing (conservative) investments prior to COVID that haven't performed well
- GICS set to mature in October 2023, and we will receive interest \$\$ then
- Emily presents three investment options for the Board to consider:
  - Long-term, non-redeemable GIC (1 year, 4.3%)
    - Allocate \$300K here which leaves \$300K for proposed short-medium term investments below
  - Short/medium term cashable GIC (cashable at any time if held for 30 days or longer, 3%);
    - This option is linked to prime, and one more interest rate hike is expected
  - Medium term, non-redeemable GICS
    - 90 day, 3.6%
    - 180 day, 3.8%
- Emily opens the floor for questions:
  - Did you choose this period of time for a specific reason (referencing 1-year for long-term investment)? Emily – 1-year seemed like a reasonable time frame based on investments available; 20years+ isn't realistic for an org like ours. Return wouldn't be that much higher for 5yrs+ GICs.
  - Will the bank hold your proposed rates? Emily – it will be worthwhile to reassess investments in 6-months as we will have a better idea of the market. In 6-mos is when we might see the peak of these interest rates. It might make sense at that time to lock into GICs when the interest rates are low.
  - After the one-year time frame proposed in the long-term option, what happens? Emily – depends on the market landscape at the time. It would be an appropriate time to reassess our investment options to make the most strategic decision.

#### Motion to redeem/ liquidate into cash existing investments of GICs and mutual funds.

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

Motion - after liquidation of existing investments, invest \$300K of total assets into a 1-year GIC and \$300K of assets into the cashable prime linked GIC. Remaining assets are to be split approximately equally between chequing and savings accounts.

- Moved by Emily

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

#### Poll results re: Board meeting options

- Out of 13, 15 participants; 80% would like hybrid model, 10% in person, 10% status quo
- 645pm is most popular time; 645-715pm fit most
- Staff have indicated they are mostly interested in keeping their staff meetings virtual, so Stacey and Karen will need to wait at the Centre for in-person meetings.
- Board discusses and agrees that they're interested in 2x in-person meetings annually
- Board agrees to host first in-person meeting in October
  - Can we combine the staff appreciation event and Board meeting to be on the same day? Robi – yes if it works for Bright Starts. Stacey will confirm if the October 18 date will work on Bright Starts end for the staff appreciation event.

#### Review - Health & Safety Policy and Program Statement & Philosophy

- These documents are reviewed and approved every year; both are posted in the Google Drive.
- All links have been updated and Stacey is not recommending any changes this year.
- All suggestions from the Committee on the health & safety policy have been incorporated.

#### Motion to approve the revised health & safety policy (Policy 1.8)

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

#### Motion to approve the revised program statement and philosophy

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

#### AGM survey response summary

- 20% participation rate
- 78% of respondents did not attend AGM
- Answers on why they didn't attend included (a) Timing was challenging (overwhelmingly the biggest response); (b) child was not yet enrolled; (c) forgot; (d) not aware; and (e) not interesting to me
- Answers on impressions of the meeting included: it was pretty standard, really well-run, good info offered, appreciated Stacey's leadership; and timing is routinely not great during dinner
- Answers on how we can encourage families to attend included (a) move to an in-person format; (b) offer childcare with dinner provided for children; (c) have it at the end of the day during pick-up time; (d) have it during lunchtime; and (e) have it after 830 or 9pm.
  - Stacey noted we used to do the AGM with food and childcare and would make quorum (although still challenging)
- The answer on whether there should there be a fee charged for families who don't attend was overwhelmingly no
- Stacey notes that there are good comments for the Nominating Committee to consider for planning next year and that more education is needed on the importance of AGM participation.

#### Staff appreciation day + event

- Last year, the Board did a week of treats for staff appreciation week by each signing up for a day to bring in their treats (during drop-off); was tracked on a spreadsheet.
- Followed up with a virtual dinner on October 25, 2021 virtual dinner with a presentation and acknowledgement of years of service
- The staff engagement committee will meet to discuss activities + gifts to share and Robi will send out an email with the link to treat spreadsheet.

#### Discussion re: preferred parking for parents of multiples

- Board agrees it would be considerate to hold 2-3 closest spots for parents with multiples
- Discussion is around a formal vs. informal approach, as enforcement is not possible
- Ideas that the Board suggests are writing an ask to save close spots for multiples on the entrance whiteboard when there are no other messages; include in an upcoming email communication; and/or posting a sign (much like there is no idling, accessible parking spots)
- Stacey will inquire with Grounds to see if a sign can be made

#### Committee break-out discussion

- Robi asks chairs to please reach out to their committee members if they haven't yet

#### New business for next meeting

- Will potentially move it a half hour earlier if it's tacked with the staff appreciation event
- Staff appreciation week + day
- Fundraising / parent social event

#### Regrets for next meeting (October 18 @ 730pm)

- N/A

#### Good news roundtable

- 42 years ago, Karen became a Canadian citizen!
- Emily's twins turn 3 on the weekend!
- Mariam moved to Kitchener!
- Sarah is expecting twins!

#### Motion to adjourn the meeting

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

Meeting adjourned 9:22pm