Bright Starts Cooperative Early Learning Centre Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 7:30 pm
Chairperson: Robilyn Vanos
Videoconference

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

Guests in attendance: Tim Sothern (BDO), Anna Lin (BDO), Heidi Nielsen (BSCELC)

Regrets: Julia Metelka, Jessica Achebe, Mariam Hassan

Meeting was called to order @ 7:32 pm.

Motion to approve the agenda
- Moved by Avery
- Seconded by Angie
- All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions
- Motion carried

Draft 2022 audit presentation
- Tim and Anna from BDO presented BSCELC's draft audited financials.
- All indicators show a strong and healthy year, and Tim/Anna note they have a clean audit opinion.
- Board ran a deficit budget, as expected; the bulk of our assets are tied up in cash and investments ($380K).
- There was an uptick in our expenditures under the salary and benefits line.
- Board reports no markable signs of fraud.
- Tim & Anna answer a question about the cost incurred around a broken investment; Tim explains it came at a loss because we broke it at less than what we paid. Tim notes there is no concern around this, as we put this cash back into a GIC, which will generate more interest than the hit we took when the investment was broken.
- Tim & Anna answer whether we should benchmark risk factors. They note that the risks presented as part of BSCELC's draft audit are standard across the non-profit world as the team is lean and senior management often deals with financial matters instead of hiring in-house accountants. In addition, the risk is already mitigated by having Board oversight and an external book-keeping service, so they have no concerns about how we're managing our risk.
- Tim & Anna note they made three recommendations to senior management – create different access points to the accounting system; create more oversight on the payroll that goes to the Executive Director; and add Board oversight and approval for credit card expenses, so they are documented and consistent.
- The Board thanks Tim & Anna for their presentation.

Recruitment and retention strategy
- Heidi Nielsen, on an 8-month contract re: the continuous quality recruitment plan at BSCELC, presented to the Board on how she has improved HR and recruitment.
- Heidi has been working toward completing a leadership development series certificate program that helps to shape her recruitment and retention strategy.

- The knowledge from the certificate program and the time granted through this contract position has allowed her to focus on improving onboarding practices, human resources and orientation practices through the following methods:
    - Revised RECE job descriptions based on best practices which now provide clear instructions on what's expected of you and how to meet those expectations.
    - Implemented cumulative performance reviews through a series of feedback conversations (3) throughout the year between educators and their supervisors.
    - Engaged with the Yearly Years Engage initiatives to support continuous quality improvement within the childcare community as a whole through 3 site visits with the Early Years analyst and pedagogical consultants to improve quality.
    - Implemented AQI as the official quality assessment tool; it is Canada's only trusted rating system to evaluate programming, learning environments and interactions.
    - Completed (almost) an employee handbook.
- Heidi answers a question about whether there's data to show retention & recruitment have increased; she notes that anecdotally BSCELC has had less turnover in the full-time roles while supply continues to be a challenge (that is sector wide).
- The Board thanks Heidi for her presentation.

Approval of March minutes

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

Executive Director's report

Financial

- BSCELC has received its core funding approval letter from CWELCC for 2023; we met all criteria for the incentive grant.
- Region has reported they have savings in their operating budget because of CWELCC, so this can be used to fund other eligible core expenditures.
- New ministry funding formula will be debuted in 2024; therefore, the funding this year can only be used to fund one-time projects.
    - Stacey is interested in investigating having Heidi's salary covered by this funding.
- Ministry of Education has shared a discussion paper re: the 2024 funding formula for child care and has asked for input; they are hosting an optional teleconference, and Stacey will be in attendance.
- Replaced one washer/dryer unit at $5700K; the other unit is functioning, so we will only replace it when needed.
- Stacey notes she had a good experience with BDO this year and has confirmed they do not plan to increase their fees for next year (approx. $22K).
- She's reached out to the following other firms:
    - Kovalenko CPA Professional Corporation ($10.5K)
    - RLB LLP (no reply)
    - PwC (do not perform audits for small non-profits)
    - MAC LLP ($20K)
- Stacey notes that she prefers working with BDO as it's been a good experience, and switching to a new firm administratively would be a lot of work for the BSCELC admin team; the Board agrees

that the familiarity and quality BDO provides are worth the $22K price tag for 2023; the Board will put forward a motion to have BDO provide the 2023 audit at the AGM in May.
- Stacey plans to look at quotes for the following year again in the summer, as firms will be less busy and able to reply.

Health & safety

- No illnesses to report.

Enrollment

- At 100% across all programs.
- Preschool 6 will increase to 16 kids shortly.
- Reminders have been sent to parents to get their summer and September withdrawals in.

Programs

- Preschool graduation is on June 21, and Stacey will send out a note to families soon.
- There will be a reception after with cake; it will be hosted at 5:30 pm.
- Parent / professional photographer Christine is offering professional grad photos for parents on May 23 at BSCELC.

Staffing & retention

- Filling staff absences lately has been very challenging; all hands from the admin team are on deck to cover absences in programs and the kitchen.
- This is a systemic issue across daycare centres in the Region.
- BSCELC is proud that they have not had to close any rooms because of staff absences.

Other

- 19 staff wanted to attend the Early Years Professionals Event, Stacey secured 14 tickets, and they are still on the waitlist for more.
- The fun fair family social event is back on July 27 – will be hosted in Lot X.
- Approx $4K spent on carnival rides, and BSCELC will sell tickets to break even.
- Feedback has been great on the parent workshop hosted by Sharon in March; Stacey is considering coordinating another on picky eaters.

Treasurer's report

- Revenue close to budget as expected.
- Payroll expenses are higher than budget; this is not a surprise as March is a 3-pay month, and when we implemented the new salaries (+ retroactive wages back to Jan).
- Expenses higher than budgeted because of insurance costs (paid annually).
- Washer expense is not reflected in this month's report, will be an adjustment for next month.
- YTD – revenue is close to budget, expenses are higher ($42K higher than budget).
- Emily is not concerned, given that insurance costs are annual, payroll fluctuations will calm down shortly, and we received the final bill for toys which is the last lot of our bulk order (grant came in 2022, but bills came in the 2023 year - spent about $40K).

- We have a healthy cash and investment position.

Motion to approve the 2022 draft financials as presented by BDO

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

Board recruitment update + motion to confirm slate of Board nominees

- Recruitment efforts this year involved emailing the original call, sending a reminder and setting up an information table in the lobby.
- There are 5 returning members, 6 new members, 3 returning new members.
- There are 8 new applications to the Board (Elizabeth Barrett, Michelle Bauer – returning new member, Matthew Cuffari, Angie Docking – returning new member, David Drewery, Micaela Kelly, Rebecca Koroll, Heather Nelson, Robilyn Vanos – returning new member).
- Nominating committee will review the executive and put forth names at the post-AGM Board meeting @ 6 pm.

Motion to approve the 2023 slate of Board nominees

- Moved by Robilyn
- Seconded by Avery
- All in favour, 3 abstentions, none opposed.
- Motion carried

New business for next meeting (May 16 – post-AGM)

- Motions to approve all new executive members.
- Stacey to come prepared to present expectations on serving as a Board member.

Good news roundtable

- Emily is going to NYC for a conference for 5 days!
- Heidi is going to Barbados!
- Lula has a healthy 3-week-old baby girl!

Motion to adjourn the meeting

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 pm.