Bright Starts Cooperative Early Learning Centre Board Meeting

December 5th, 2023, at 7:30

Minutes

Attendance – Robi, Stacey, Karen, Avery, Heather, Sarah, Micaela, Eleanor, Dave, Elizabeth, Lula, Matt, Michelle, Rebecca
Regrets – Angie, Anthony

Approval of agenda
Heather moved, 2nd Avery, motion carried, no opposed, no abstentions.

Approval of October minutes
Avery moved, 2nd Eleanor, motion carried, no opposed, no abstentions.

Treasurer's report, 2024 Budget Review, Approval of year-end bonus.
2024 Budget Item 1 – see report items in December folder.

- CWELCC and client fees, biggest line items
- Interest income is up because of high interest environment, this year is 21.
- Expenses: Wages and salaries up 20%, payroll up 20%, the admin expenses big spot is food up 20%, insurances up a little bit, janitorial up 30% discussed last minute, program supplies decreased with increased janitorial, staff recognition is up and so is toys and crafts budget because of additional kids, total expenses up 18%
- Deficit only around -10,000 right now

Year-end bonus

- Spend 80k, 32k as a performance bonus, then 1k

Questions

1) Robi – 5 educators would increase expenses by 20%, seems high?

Stacey – looking at 50k each in terms of salaries, increasing supply staff by one with their sick days and vacation/lieu days. Revenue does outweigh the difference, also Heidi's role is being factored into this.

Avery – Keep in mind this is a provisional budget, formula will change with new rules, have to wait to see what the percentages will end up being for sure in 2024.

2) Heather – Why is that number 20% for 5 extra staff…. Do new staff get hired at a higher rate that's faster increasing than the pre-existing staff?

Avery – There's a matrix for the salary scale, so that shouldn't be the reason for the % increase.

Stacey - We're hiring more entry level educators, a lot of competition for hiring.

Heather – How are we making sure we're appreciating the existing, long-time staff.

Stacey – They're going up the ladder in respect to their seniority and with the bonuses.

Avery – Ladders and increments may change with new region rules, future convo for 2024.

3) Micaela – Why are the daycare operators the lowest paid, why does our ladder start lower?

Avery – We just got those survey results, but we don't know the methodology behind it, so it's unknown. Are they taking averages in a centre or across centres? The results didn't come with any documentation though, just the numbers were received.

Stacey – Our average salary is a little lower with entry level people we have, but we probably sit in the middle more accurately. Survey of non-profits centre, not for profit.

Michelle – were some of the centres surveyed in the city maybe? Thought our matrix was really good when we made it…

General board agreement that we think it was weird that survey said our staff were paid low.

4) Michelle - How is the bonus explained to the staff?

Avery – context of great uncertainty in the long term, we don't know exactly what the revenue will look like in the future, two big messages to them – inflation and GIC income being higher.

Stacey – Sector is prominent with all the new announcements from the Minister, advertised that ECE are paid lower than other fields, this is a way for bright starts to recognize we value our staff, we can't control salary increases anymore because we're tied to province with cost escalation now, there's no increase listed yet we don't what the % will be for 2024 year because new rules aren't announced.

Avery – Additional bonus is 2% of the 14% we're contemplating.

Robi – Is there a cost-of-living increase included here?

Avery – More complicated algorithm we're not using it for the provisional budget, there's a step-by-step policy for how we decide wages we use in the past years, there's a cost of living % wide increase, we have to revisit this policy as a whole because it's irrelevant since were controlled by the province now.

Heather – In terms of communication to staff, CWELCC and centre differences in how we provide bonuses can we just say that's how we decide on bonuses?

Avery – Yes, that's what happened, and another message is that we can afford to do it as well.

Heather – We would want to know if we were staff, why we're getting money and why and how its split up.

Stacey- It will all be in the letter to the staff explaining that its one time and could be next year depending on x, y, z, reasons.

5) Michelle – Projected deficit for 2024 is 28k, we don't know anything on any scales on how wages will go up?

Avery – We have 2023 snapshot, but we can't change wages at all until we know what's coming in 2024, where we are right now is based on historical pay scale, but in the new year, change pay scale and what we think revenues will be and how we will determine for 2024 to keep deficit close to what we're projecting.

Three votes needed by board – approve provisional budget, and year-end bonus and performance bonus staying the same.

Motion to approve the provisional budget pending the 2024 February rule announcements.
Moved Heather, 2nd Michelle, no opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

Motion to approve the staff appreciation bonus as described in the documents provided by finance and committee.
Moved Heather, 2nd Eleanor, no opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

Motion to approve the performance bonus as described in the documents provided by the finance and committee.
Moved Heather,2nd Dave, no opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

Treasurer report details:
Revenue is up because of one time funding and GICS.
P6 ended in august, last month payroll was higher, because of three payrolls in sept and in October lower than past months, general and admin no fundraising or donations in October.
Up 34k more than anticipated.
YTD regional grants, one time funding, cost escalation, and payroll additional P6 and Heidi's position, general and admin, net income budgeted deficit of 90k, were at just over 10k instead which is good!
Balance sheet highlights the GICs that came due in October, investments have increased, moved 50k from savings to investments the interest that accrued on the GICS was rolled into new GICS.

Executive Director's report
Funding: last meeting we applied for access and expansion funding application was approved for 40k and covers full cost of reno and toys etc. half the funding now and remainder received when funding completed
One time funding expenditure report submitted – will receive rest of money mid-December.
We asked for an extension on our accessibility project to beginning of December from end of October and it was approved.
$250 honorarium for anti-racism course, module 4 by dec first they will get honorarium on paychecks this week.
No more updates on cwelcc or core funding for 2024
Ontario's childcare workforce strategy – ministry preliminary info on retention and recruitment of professionals in our field
2024 increases 20- 23.86 an hour, 23- 24 for supervisors, keep increasing to 2026 – See Stacey's report.

Health safety nutrition
Germs are back, public health has communicated a memo to childcare operators regarding covid 19, no new guidance anticipated in the future, no provincial requirements to use the screening tool, public health continues to recommend covid symptoms stay home for 24 hours, our policies are consistent with this.

In camera
Robi proposed motion to go in camera, Eleanor moved, 2nd Heather, no opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

Enrollment
Centre is full still, we are planning to increase toddler programs up to 15, pressure from cwelcc and community access to licensed centre, 15 in T2 and T5 in January, T3 in March, T1 and T4 as soon as we can staff them – difficulties staffing.
January 100% includes filling additional toddler spaces in T2 and T5.

In camera
Robi motion to go in camera, Micaela moved, 2nd Heather, no opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

Educator is resigning in July.
T5 renovations started 2 weeks ago, moving along well, full 6 weeks likely, flooring delays.
Kids transitioned well.
Mat leave returning, she will be third educator in T2 with increase in Jan to 15 kids.
Annual licensing inspection soon, license renews in February.

One time funding, sensory equipment has been ordered, won't be up until the new year.
Loft for T5 after renos complete.

Policy Approvals
Policy 5.17 - Electronic Monitoring (new)
Stems from working for workers act, we have the potential that we could monitor devices, even though we don't now.
Motion to approve policy 5.17.
Heather moved, 2nd matt, no opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

Policy 1.18 - Safe Arrival and Dismissal (new)
New regulation recently announced from ministry of education, safe arrival and dismissal policy similar to what school boards do now, formalizing what we do in the case of a child not arriving as expected and releasing a child from care procedures etc., ministry provided a script of this essentially, there was some confusion in this child centre community what we do if we can't get a hold of anyone would we call the police? This was clarified.
Questions/discussion:
Heather – long blurb about checking in with parents everyday – do they have to do this then? It feels over burdensome.
Stacey - took it out after reading all the comments from the committee, we have exceeded the minimum requirements and were comfortable with it as outlined in document.
Elizabeth – two hours after dropping off?
Stacey – we can choose the timeframe to check in within, two hours is what we felt was a good timing instead of a time of day.
Heather – do you find parents reach out anyways or are they not doing this?
Stacey- most parents do, there is the odd time we have to follow up, it will be in the newsletter for the new year. Encouraging parents to call if child will not be there.
Robi- have you considered making an attendance specific email like at public schools?
Stacey- most parents use the app, probably best to do it through the app, we haven't had many problems with reporting absences.
Michelle – is two hours too long if the aim is to prevent extreme situations like death?
Stacey – talked to other directors a lot, other policies are following up with families the day after.
Karen – will take some time to get into a schedule of calling parents and checking attendance.

Motion to approve policy 1.18.
Heather moved, 2nd Michelle, no opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

Agenda items & regrets for next meeting (January 16th, 2024)
Michelle – bright starts birthday event – possibly having the fundraising committee help with that?
Is everything done or do they still need help with that, Stacey- we haven't picked a date yet, Jan 2nd is the birthday, Chris Anne is spearheading this, would like help for sure though!

--- **Feedback** (from feedback box and online feedback form) – None.

--- **ADJOURNMENT 8:42**