Bright Starts Cooperative Early Learning Centre Board Meeting
Tuesday, February 18th, 2025 at 7:30PM
Chairperson: Rebecca Koroll
Virtual Meeting (via Zoom)

Minutes

*** Please note that all relevant documents listed below for this meeting are located in this month's Board of Directors Meeting folder ***

In Attendance: Rebecca, Elizabeth, Sean, Angie, Michelle, Avery, Maeve, Derek, Micaela, Stacey, Karen
Regrets: Davene, Matt, Alyssa, Dave, Janice
Absent: Patrick

Nasser Mohieddin Abukhdeir from FAUW invited to join the first part of the meeting.

Meeting called to order at 7:33.

7:33 **Approval** of Agenda – **Rebecca**
Moved by Michelle, seconded by Maeve.
9 in favour, no opposed, no abstentions.
Motion carried.

7:34 **Approval** of January 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes – **Rebecca**
Moved by Maeve, seconded by Angie.
9 in favour, no opposed, no abstentions.
Motion carried.

7:35 **FAUW Presentation**

- Nasser is a board member from Faculty Association of UW (FAUW)
- Over the past year, a number of members have made the FAUW board aware of the challenges related to child care. Dean of Math has also expressed concern that the lack of child care has been a challenge in recruitment. To address these concerns, FAUW started a child care working group in September 2024.
- FAUW has created a child care resources webpage to provide information for the whole university community: https://uwaterloo.ca/faculty-association/faculty-guide/childcare-resources
- A survey of FAUW members was recently completed to collect data on child care challenges and quantify the issue, which closed on January 10th. Analysis of the results is still ongoing.
- The working group is creating two presentations to be shared on the topic of child care: one to raise awareness of the challenges to those who don't need child care but care about the broader community, and one to communicate the issue to university leadership
- Nasser understands that Bright Starts might be interested in expanding and FAUW is looking to work with Bright Starts to help address the child care challenges of the university community.
- Derek noted that the preliminary survey results seem to indicate the need for child care for the university community is not just for the geography immediately surrounding the UW main campus. Students and faculty are spreading out further than the immediate area near the university and Bright Starts but still require child care, including those who

live in priority areas elsewhere in the Region. It is a longer term objective to expand daycare, but decisions and planning need to be made now for future growth of child care.

- Stacey has had a number of meetings with Nasser and others on the child care working group over the past few months. Stacey asked Nasser to clarify the request of the board.
- Nasser: What potential is there for expansion in the short or long term? Need planning and preparation now for a future build as it will take years. Nasser noted that expressing interest to Mike Pereira (Director of Real Estate) would be the first step if Bright Starts would like to expand in future. There needs to be exploration discussions. Expansion could involve re-purposing an existing building. Recent assessment of buildings and some were identified to be decommissioned, which could potentially be repurposed for child care. If expansion is on the horizon, then "proof of concept" discussions with university leadership should happen sooner rather than later. The previous approach for the existing Bright Starts building would not necessarily be the model for a future facility.
- Stacey has meetings with Region in the coming months and can raise the question of whether the Region would even be open to a centre outside of one of the priority areas receiving CWELCC funding, but expects the Region to question how Bright Starts would fund an expansion as there is not enough money in the reserves for that.
- Nasser noted that resources from the University could be used, as was done for the first building.
- Any follow-up questions can be forwarded to Nasser at nmabukhdeir@uwaterloo.ca

- Discussions continued after Nasser left the Zoom meeting.
- Question was asked if it would be an expansion and a second centre. Stacey recommended a second centre rather than expanding the existing building.
- Board discussed who the centre would service. It was noted that staff at the future hospital may want to get spaces within a new centre. Stacey noted that because of the new CWELCC funding model, the Region will likely want the spaces to be accessible. Currently faculty/staff/students all have same priority at Bright Starts.
- Stacey wants to know if a new centre would be eligible for CWELCC funding, which may not be the case if the centre is on the main UW campus, so Stacey wants to understand if the Region would even be open to a centre outside of one of the priority areas.

7:58 Treasurer's Report – Elizabeth

- Elizabeth provided report on both January 2025 actuals vs. January 2024 actuals since 2025 budget has not yet been finalized.
- Net income for January was about $127k ahead of previous year.

8:02 2025 Budget Update – Avery

- Avery provided overview of memo sent to board on February 18, 2025.
- Funding formula has changed significantly from last year.
- Now in third full year of CWELCC funding and every year the formula has changed significantly. This year was the most significant changes, but the changes are positive.
- Provisional budget will be presented in March, with final budget to be presented for approval in April.
- Last year we were in surplus position, and likely to continue surplus in 2025, which is why Avery has requested an immediate 1% increase to staff benefits as this can not be made retroactively.
- Stacey worked with benefits provider to see what positive changes could be made. Changes provide staff with more flexibility in how they can support their health. Staff loved the wellness account that was added last year.

Motion to approve immediate 1% increase to staff benefits as per the memorandum from Avery dated February 18, 2025.
Moved by Maeve, seconded by Elizabeth.
8 in favour, no opposed, Michelle abstained.
Motion carried.

- Stacey shared Article 23.1 of bylaw, which states: “The dues payable by the Members of each class shall be fixed by the Board from time to time. The Board may, from time to time and in its sole discretion, waive all or any part of the dues for a particular applicant or membership class.”
- Stacey recommended the Board vote to waive this fee.

Motion to discontinue the $50.00 co-operative membership fee charged annually to families.
Moved by Avery, seconded by Derek.
9 in favour, no opposed, no abstentions.
Motion carried.

8:08 Executive Director’s Report – Stacey

- No major funding updates. Workforce funding workbook was due February 13th, Region reached out today with some minor questions, so expecting that funding to be approved in coming days.
- Operators now required to submit their 2025 operating budgets.
- CWELLC cost-based allocation funding letter received in December was preliminary, so there could be some changes.
- Tax receipts were sent out to families.
- Financial audit is scheduled for week of March 3-7.
- Enteric outbreak declared over on February 3rd. Quite a few centres in the Region were on outbreak at the same time as Bright Starts.
- Public Health has recently updated their exclusion guidelines related to gastro/enteric symptoms. Stacey presented proposed changes to the Bright Starts Health and Illness policy that reflect the Public Health revised guidelines.

Motion to approve proposed changes to Policy 1.4 Health and Illness as presented by Stacey.
Moved by Maeve, seconded by Angie.
9 in favour, no opposed, no abstentions.
Motion carried.

- Child had finger severely pinched in the multi-purpose room door. Pinch guard has been added to the door.
- Serious occurrence involving unsupervised child who left the preschool group while playing on the hill at the end of the parking lot. A Serious Occurrence report was submitted to the Ministry of Education.
- Enrollment continues to be at 100% in February and projected for March (including 100% projected enrollment for Preschool 6 in March).
- Newly hired Educator who started in December has resigned and accepted a position at another child care centre.
- Request to attend a conference in Toronto in March presented by Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion (IEMHP). Cost is approximately $3,800 and has been factored

into the draft 2025. Unusual for staff to attend large conferences such as this, but Stacey is supportive of this request. No objections were raised by the board to this request.
- All new items for sensory room have been received and installation is scheduled for Friday, February 21st. Stacey thinks it will be the first room of its kind in the Region.

8:28 2024 Staff Engagement Survey Results - Stacey
- Sent to all staff in December 2024.
- Three sections with different themes (Work Environment, Advancement and Career Growth, Compensation and Benefits)
- Stacey presented results and strengths/improvements as compiled by Janice.
- General theme that staff are unsatisfied with wages, which is true across the sector.
- Board discussed potentially providing discounted or paid UW parking, which Stacey noted would be considered a taxable benefit to staff.
- Suggestion to provide financial management workshop for staff. Stacey will see if any financial management resources are available through the EAP program.
- Stacey noted that personal day entitlement is higher than most other centres.
- Stacey noted they may look at allowing sick days to be banked, or as other providers allow for up to 6 sick days to be carried over and converted to vacation days. Staff can use half sick/personal days as needed. Also offer lieu time for staff meetings, etc. Stacey may look at sick day policy to replace the word “sick” with “wellness” to allow more flexibility.
- UW vacation allocation policy was shared with the board: https://uwaterloo.ca/human-resources/employee-resources/vacations-and-holidays
- Suggestion to do staff appreciation gestures (food, treats, etc.) more than just during staff appreciation week, but rather throughout the year.

Motion to go in camera to discuss specific feedback from survey.
Moved by Michelle, seconded by Micaela
9 in favour, no opposed, no abstained
Motion carried

--- **New Business/Items for next agenda** (March 18th)
- Follow-up on Stacey’s discussions with Region about whether a potential new centre would be eligible for CWELLC funding.
- Begin planning for AGM. Michelle will need to look at sending out a save the date for the AGM. Also need to send out call for nominations in mid-March so that slate can be presented in April.

--- **Regrets for next meeting** (March 18th)
- None

--- **Feedback** (from Gmail and Box)
- None

--- **ADJOURNMENT**
Meeting adjourned at 9:01.