Bright Starts Cooperative Early Learning Centre Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 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, Derek, Micaela, Davene, Matt, Alyssa, Dave, Patrick, Stacey, Karen
Regrets: Maeve, Janice
Absent: None

Meeting called to order at 7:31.

7:31 **Approval** of Agenda – **Rebecca**
Moved by Dave, seconded by Angie.
13 in favour, no opposed, no abstentions.
Motion carried.

7:32 **Approval** of February 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes – **Rebecca**
Moved by Elizabeth, seconded by Avery.
12 in favour, no opposed, Matt abstains.
Motion carried.

7:33 **2025 Provisional Budget** – **Avery**

- Avery provided brief overview of where budget process stands, but final funding amount won't be known until end of March
- Right now projecting a total revenue of $4.8M, with surplus allocation of $300k (for investment), resulting in operating revenue of $4.5M.
- Region verbally said 5% wage increase would be expected.
- Currently projecting an operating surplus of $200,000 surplus after projected operating expenses, wages, and G&A.

7:35 **Treasurer's Report** – **Elizabeth**

- Elizabeth provided summary of Feb 2025 Actual compared to Feb 2024 Actuals (since budgeted amount for 2025 still has not been finalized)
- Payroll based on 100% occupancy.
- Positive cash flow of just under $100k in Feb 2025 resulting from net income of $127k
- Final instalment on lofts was paid in Feb 2025
- Overall, cash plus investments is about $1.22M, an increase from the prior month.

7:38 **AGM Organization and Nominating Committee Updates** - **Michelle**

- AGM date officially changed to Tuesday May 13th. Save the date has been sent out to parents.
- Board traditionally provides "potluck" of drinks, desserts, salad, chips, etc. to supplement pizza and bottled water provided by Bright Starts. Michelle will send out sign-up sheet to board. Not sure how many people will attend until parents register.

- Stacey noted that Karen reached out to School of Optometry, and a space in the Optometry building seems to still be available during construction, but it may be a different room than last year. Will confirm once class schedule for next term is finalized. There are two potential rooms in Optometry building that would work well for AGM.
- 8 board members have completed first year of their 2-year term and will be returning on the board next year.
- Rebecca has expressed interest to return as a board member (as well as president) for an additional year.
- VP, One Co-Treasurer, and Secretary roles need to be filled. If any current board members are interested in volunteering for these roles, reach out to nominating committee. Avery will be staying on as one of the Co-Treasurers. Only need to have one Treasuer, but Stacey and Avery agree that there is benefit to having two treasurers based on the workload for the role(s).
- 17 parents have registered for board information session tomorrow at noon.
- Maximum number of board members is 15, so potentially 6 board seats to be filled.
- End of March for applications, but could extend deadline by a week depending on interest and still have a week to review applications before next board meeting. Slate of candidates to be presented at the April board meeting.

7:46 Executive Director's Report – Stacey

- Not a lot of updates on funding. Still waiting on final budget approval letter from Region. 2025 operating budget was submitted to Region before the extended deadline of February 27th. 2024 funding reconciliation submitted to Region by deadline of today. Seeking clarification from Region on potential error. Any recoverable amount owed back would be reduced from monthly funding.
- Financial audit still underway, all going well so far. Auditors will attend April 15th board meeting to present draft financials.
- Kitchen team looking to revise menu to include more culturally diverse items and seeking parent input.
- Serious incident occurred in March when a child was left unsupervised in sensory room for approximately 10 minutes. Serious Occurrence Report was filed with the Ministry of Education and the incident was reported to Family and Children's Services. Parents informed and they requested a follow-up meeting for the following day. Non-compliance was added, and a condition will be added to our operating license for the implementation of our supervision plan at all times. Educators/staff involved were provided with a written verbal warning, required to re-read and sign an acknowledgement of having read Supervision Policy and Best Practices. There were questions from the board about the incident and Stacey provided the following supplemental information: to questions from board:
    - Sensory room is locked from the outside so that children cannot open the door and enter on their own, but the child could have theoretically opened the door from inside (if they were able to reach handle). Room is not sound-proof.
    - No security camera in the sensory room (or anywhere in the centre).
    - Condition will remain on the operating license for about three years.
    - Delay in educators reporting the incident to management, which was problematic as it was not reported until the next day and centre only has 24 hours to report a serious occurrence. Written warnings were issued to educators involved for not reporting the incident promptly.
- Occupancy in all programs was 100% in March, and projected to be 100% in April.
- Summer withdrawals: Stacey will be sending an email to families in early April reminding of our withdrawal policy.

- Some recent staff changes. Kitchen staff on leave. One resignation, one contract not renewed, one termination. Staffing is currently tight. Will be better in May with new Educators starting.

  Motion to go in camera to discuss staffing changes.
  Moved by Michelle, seconded by Micaela.
  Motion carried.

  Motion to go out of camera.
  Moved by Alyssa, seconded by Dave.
  Motion carried.

- Preschool graduation tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 5, 2025.
- Annual Fun Fair tentatively scheduled for Thursday, July 17, 2025.
- All new items in sensory room have been received and installed. Open houses for parents is planned for April.
- Annual Early Years Celebration scheduled for May 26th at RIM Park. Historically, Bright Starts have paid for staff to attend ($30/ticket) and 14 have signed up so far to attend.
- Expansion meeting was held with the Region and was informative. All CWELCC spaces for 2025 and 2026 have been allocated, meaning new centres would have no CWELCC funding and fees would be astronomical. Children's Services has submitted a request to the Province for an additional 500 spaces in 2026, which if approved would result in a call out for new CWELCC space applications. Children's Services does not know what CWELCC funding looks like beyond 2026. Current funding guaranteed per new space is $9,000; however, funding could actually be up to $17,000 per new space due to Regional surplus from other projects. No longer expansion funding, only start-up funding. Region recognizes that operators are finding it difficult to secure locations within identified priority areas, so new spaces outside of priority areas could be considered for CWELCC funding. For new centre, 30% of spaces would need to be saved for subsidy eligible families, but could still identify own priority waitlist in addition (i.e., priority for UW community, but 30% of which would need to be subsidy eligible families such as grad students, etc.). For reference, there are currently 10 subsidy eligible families out of a total of 196 families at Bright Starts.
- Stacey will begin drafting letter to UW Admin to express support for new centre and starting the process of finding location, completing renovations, etc.
- Based on staff feedback survey, looking to strengthen workplace, retention and growth strategies to stay competitive through the following initiatives:
    - Expand career growth and advancement opportunities by creating four supervisor designate positions to establish career growth and advancement while also supporting Bright Start's succession planning initiative. Total cost would be $5,200 per year for a $50 honorarium paid to the four designated supervisor roles per pay period ($1,300 per year). Would be separate line item on pay stubs to highlight the additional amount. Job description would be created and interested staff would need to apply.
        - Question about whether this was explored as a term position, as opposed to a permanent role. Stacey thinks if there is a lot of interest then it could be explored as a term position, but doesn't expect many staff to be interested.
    - Enhancing earned vacation entitlement by proposing an additional earned week of vacation beyond our current policy so that new staff would start at three weeks vacation (capped at 6 weeks). Total cost would be approximately

$29,000-$35,000 per year based on 36 positions requiring coverage when off for the additional week.
        - Michelle noted that additional week of vacation was previously explored and it was decided at that time to revisit it in future.
    - Removing the stigma around personal illness and personal emergency days by revising policy around well days. Not expecting significant additional cost as majority of our employees fully utilize their personal illness and emergency leave days within a calendar year.
        - Question: How would staff use wellness day as opposed to vacation days? Stacey noted that these days are not meant to be used the same as vacation (e.g., not for a week-long holiday), but rather for 12 days off here and there for any wellness reasons needed by the employee (subject to the organization's staffing needs) which could include sick time, family sick time, doctors appointments, massages, personal emergencies, etc.
    - Moving forward, exploring options to bank unused sick days. Further research is needed - could potentially be costly (no buyout at termination). Stacey will reach out to other child care centres as well as benefits coordinator to find out what is being done elsewhere.
- Stacey noted that policy amendments will need to be formally approved by the board to implement these changes, but at this time just looking for direction that board is open to these changes in principle. No objections were raised. Stacey will circulate memo to board before the April board meeting describing the proposed changes and corresponding proposed amendment to vacation policy so that board can review in advance of voting on a motion to approve these changes.

  Motion to approve revisions to Policy #3.1: Serious Occurrence and Policy #4.10: Supervision as described by Executive Director, conditional on further board review by Friday, March 21, 2025.
  Moved by Michelle, seconded by Matt.
  13 in favour, no opposed, no abstentions.
  Motion carried.

--- **New Business/Items for next agenda** (April 15th)
- Approve slate of candidates for board seats for 2025-2027
- Draft financial audit presentation by BDO
- Motion to approve retention and growth initiatives (Stacey will share memo in advance describing the proposed changes and amendment to vacation policy)

--- **Regrets for next meeting** (April 15th)
- None

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

--- **ADJOURNMENT**
Meeting adjourned at 8:53.