Bright Starts Cooperative Early Learning Centre Board Meeting
Tuesday, January 20 at 7:30 pm
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 Meetings folder ***

In Attendance: Rebecca, Derek, Yuntian, Kaitlin, Valarie, Katie, Sean, Janice, Alyssa, Patrick, Davene, Andrea, Karen and Stacey
Regrets: Avery
Absent: Maeve

Meeting called to order at 7:33

7:34 **Approval** of Agenda – **Rebecca**
Moved by Patrick, seconded by Janice.
12 in favour, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.
Motion carried.

7:35 **Approval** of November 18, 2025, Meeting Minutes – **Rebecca**
Moved by Sean, seconded by Patrick.
10 in favour, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions.
Motion carried.

7:36 **Crisis Management Subcommittee Report** – **Rebecca**

A memo was provided to the Board in advance of the January 20, 2026, meeting outlining actions taken by the Subcommittee since November 2025.

7:56 **Staff Environment Survey Summary** – **Janice**

A Staff Environment Survey was distributed to all staff in December 2025. A total of 25 responses were received, representing a 45% response rate, consistent with 2024 participation (24 responses). The survey assessed staff feedback across the same three core categories as the previous year—Work Environment, Career Growth, and Compensation and Benefits—and included additional questions related to the staff appreciation event, which was new data for the 2025 survey.

Key Findings:
- Work Environment:
    - Strengths - The highest levels of agreement (96%) were related to staff feeling that their viewpoints are respected and that creativity and innovation are encouraged.
    - Areas for Improvement - The highest level of disagreement (25–29%) related to perceptions of open communication and implementing change as needed.
    - Open-Ended Feedback – Overall the survey revealed a great working environment with a few areas for improvement including the need for greater

consistency in communication from office staff, supervisory support in infant and toddler rooms, staff feeling overwhelmed by Digibot, and the need for increased meeting room space.
    - Overall satisfaction levels increased compared to 2024, with a lower rate of dissatisfaction and only one instance of a “never” response.
- Advancement and Career Growth:
    - Strengths - 96% of respondents would recommend Bright Starts as a place of employment. 84% indicated they see themselves working at Bright Starts one year from now. Staff generally feel opportunities for advancement exist and can be pursued, and Bright Starts is viewed as a preferred employer within the sector.
    - Overall, this category performed consistently or at an improved level compared to 2024.
- Compensation and Benefits:
    - Strengths - Vacation allotment (88%) and work-life balance (84%) were identified.
    - Areas for Improvement - Eyeglass and dental coverage tied (56%).
    - Open-Ended Responses - positive feedback focused on wellness initiatives, flexibility, feeling supported, and access to vacation and sick days. Suggested improvements included salary levels and expanded dental coverage, including orthodontics.
- Recognition and Appreciation:
    - Feedback regarding recognition and appreciation included comments on salary and bonuses; However, it was noted that the survey was conducted prior to the distribution of 2025 staff bonuses.
- Staff Appreciation Event Feedback:
    - Overall, lots of positive feedback received including high ratings for the dinner and the slideshow presentation. Suggestions included offering more vegetarian options, reallocating décor funds toward gifts, more frequent staff treats, and increased budget for gifts.

Discussion:
- Staff feedback regarding regular treats throughout the year has been positive and well received; staff expressed appreciation and enthusiasm.
- It was noted that follow-up after the survey is important to identify and communicate areas of action.
- It was recommended that feasible suggestions be brought forward for discussion at the February Board meeting.
- Communication between office staff and classroom staff emerged as a recurring theme requiring further attention.

8:21 Treasurer’s Report – Yuntian
- Yuntian provided an overview of November and December 2025 and YTD financial results. Full financial details are available in the *January 2026 Treasurer’s Report* PowerPoint, located in the Finance Folder on the Board’s Google Drive.
    - November 2025 Highlights: Actual revenue is higher than budgeted ($9,042) due to CWELCC funding and subsidy fees being higher than budgeted; Total expenses are lower than budgeted ($34,348) which includes actual payroll expenses being lower than budgeted wages and salaries ($23,716) AND general and administrative expenses being lower than budgeted ($10,633); Overall, net income is $43,390 higher than budgeted when we account for higher total revenue and lower total expenses this month.

- December 2025 Highlights: Actual revenue is higher than budgeted ($70,185) due to CWELCC funding and subsidy fees being higher than budgeted; Total expenses are higher than budgeted ($106,615) which includes actual payroll expenses being higher than budgeted wages and salaries ($127,533) but general and administrative expenses are lower than budgeted ($20,782); Overall, net income is $36,429 lower than budgeted when we account for higher total expenses this month.
- YTD Highlights: Total revenue is higher than budgeted ($360,725) and total expenses are higher than budgeted ($73,817), therefore total net income is higher than budgeted ($286,908); YTD actual as % of annual budget is 101.71% in total expenses but revenue is 107.68% and overall net income is 176.22%.
- Balance Sheet Highlights: Negative cash flow of $121,000 in December; Cash plus investments decreased from November 1.64M to 1.52M in December.

8:26 Executive Director's Report – Stacey

- Stacey provided a summary of key updates. The full report is available in the *January 2026 Executive Director's Report* file, located in the January Meeting Folder on the Board's Google Drive. Highlights include:

Financial updates –

- A CWELCC Cost Review meeting was held with Children's Services on November 21, 2025. It was noted that there are no identified opportunities for efficiencies or cost savings within the current operating budget that would not impact quality.
- 2025 Reconciliation Process - Any unspent funding or funding used for ineligible expenses will be recovered and will impact 2026 funding allocations. Final 2025 reconciliations will be reviewed and confirmed in Spring 2026, at which time the final cost-based allocation and recoverable amounts will be determined.
- 2026 CWELCC Funding - applications are due in January. 2026 benchmarks have increased by 5.5% to address inflation and workforce compensation requirements. The final 2026 Rolling Top-Up will be determined after 2025 reconciliations are approved. Current recoverable amounts will reduce the organization's top-up percentage (currently approximately 38%).
- Parent Fees – will remain unchanged in 2026, and the $22.00/day cap remains in place.
- Workforce Compensation - No changes were announced for 2026 regarding base wages or the Order of Operations. The Wage Enhancement ceiling will increase to $33.81/hour. The CWELCC Annual Increase will rise by $1.00/hour, allowing RECEs to receive up to $4.00/hour. Another change will include paid holidays.
- 2026 Operating Budget - The organization will continue to operate under the 2025 budget until 2026 funding approvals are received in the spring. Drafting of the 2026 operating budget is underway.
- 2025 Child Care Tax Receipts – Jan-Aug 2025 tax receipts have been generated from the previous administration system. Receipts have been emailed to families who have withdrawn and printed for currently enrolled families for pickup. Sept-Dec 2025 tax receipts will be available through the Digibot system.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition –

- Child Care Centre safety measures - advised that existing parking barriers may be retained and purchased; however, permanent installations will not be funded at this time, as only temporary safety measures are currently eligible for funding, and an application will also be submitted for barriers for Lot X.
- Coroner case review - Updates were shared regarding an upcoming Coroner case review, noting that most recommendations relate to septic systems and are not applicable to the Centre, though some non-septic-related recommendations may require review once finalized.
- Health inspection - the Centre also successfully completed a health inspection and was found to be in full compliance on the same day.

Enrollment – 100% occupancy

Staffing/Programs – Planning for the Preschool, P6 class, opening in March is underway

"Other" Updates -

- Digibot Administration Software – Feedback from staff and families has been shared with the vendor and a decision was made to hold off on providing additional Q&A to parents as software updates are coming soon; several enhancements were implemented in December, further improvements and a mobile app are expected in Q1 2026, complaints have decreased, and educators have begun using Digibot for accident reporting with plans to implement the medication form feature.

- Logo Design/Rebrand – An update was provided on the logo redesign project, including completion of a kickoff meeting and on-site visit by the creative team, with initial design concepts anticipated in late January or early February.

- Google Review – A one star Google review from a former employee was noted, along with a proposed response reaffirming the organization's commitment to staff wellbeing. The board approved the Executive Director's response to the review and members were encouraged to submit personal reviews.

- Staff Enhancement 2026 – A recommendation was discussed to add an additional Professional Development Day in the spring to support team collaboration during work hours and promote staff work life balance.

--- **New Business/Items for next agenda (February 17)**
- Policies moved to February.

--- **Regrets for next meeting (February 17)**
- Davene sends regrets.

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

--- **ADJOURNMENT**
- Meeting adjourned at **8:50**