Fort Macleod Early Learning & Childcare Society
Board Meeting Minutes
Date: February 24, 2026 **Time:** 8:00 PM MST **Location:** Virtual

In attendance: Lee Holfeld, Jesse Syrowitz, Mackenzie Hengerer, Laura Yunick
Regrets: Keeley Odney

1. Call to Order

1.a. Meeting called to order by Mackenzie Hengerer at 8:03 PM.
1.b. Confirmation of quorum was made.
1.c. Approval of Agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda as presented made by Jesse Syrowitz, seconded by Lee Holfeld. Outcome: Carried.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

2.a. Review of December 18, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes. The Board did not meet in January 2026.
2.b. No amendments were requested.

Motion to approve the December 18, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes made by Lee Holfeld, seconded by Jesse Syrowitz. Outcome: Carried.

3. Executive & Officer Updates

3.a. Chair / President Update

The Chair reviewed the Society's 2026 strategic priorities, reaffirming the Board's commitment to supporting a comprehensive early learning model within Fort Macleod. Strategic focus areas include:

- Parents and guardians
- Early childhood educators
- Valued community stakeholders
- Programs operating within the rural community

The President emphasized a strengthened stakeholder and community engagement strategy for 2026, designed to support sustainable rural growth and improved access to early childhood education.

Stakeholder Engagement – February 23, 2026
On February 23, 2026, the President attended a local staff meeting consisting of 19 early childhood professionals, including licensed day home contractors, out-of-school care coordinators (including kindergarten OSC), and educators supporting children ages three to five. The purpose of attendance was to facilitate engagement, communicate the Society's priorities, and strengthen

collaboration across the rural childcare landscape. Discussion highlights included:

• Building stronger rural educator support systems
• Exploring a locally delivered Early Childhood Education diploma or certificate cohort in Fort Macleod
• Leveraging Board capacity, including a Bachelor of Education member, to support long-term sustainability of the cohort/schooling
• Reinforcing that quality childcare looks different for every family and that multiple models should be supported within the community landscape

The President reported strong engagement and positive feedback. The Society committed to:

• Amplifying educator stories with consent
• Advocating for improved rural funding equity
• Better understanding tensions where provincial supports often concentrate in urban centres
• Supporting private for-profit, nonprofit agencies, and contracted educators under a unified rural advocacy model

Additional stakeholder engagement over the past month included:

• Meetings with 2 post-secondary institutions and their deans
• Exploration of a food security initiative to be facilitated through the Society and a local catering group for parents/guardians
• Continued partnership discussions supporting the Kinder Roots program serving ages zero to three and a half upon licensing

All initiatives will follow a slow and sustainable growth model as discussed by the Board.

3.b. Secretary Update

In the absence of Secretary Keeley Odney, the President provided an update on corporate records and compliance. Records, banking documentation, and nonprofit filings remain current and properly maintained as of February 2026.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Laura Yunick delivered the financial report.

• A nonprofit community account has been opened with Alberta Treasury Branch (ATB).
• Current balance is approximately $8,200, primarily from community sponsorships and donations. A few outstanding cheques are to be deposited.
• Revenues, expenses, and grant allocations are tracked through an internal budget document.
• The Board discussed publishing financial transparency documents on the Society's website when the spreadsheet is approved by the Treasurer/Secretary.

Signing authorities remain Laura Yunick and Keeley Odney, who are authorized to manage financial transactions and liaise with grant disbursement bodies on behalf of the Society.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report made by Mackenzie Hengerer, seconded by Lee Holfeld. Outcome: Carried.

5. Old Business

5.a. Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks
All Board members have up-to-date criminal record checks and vulnerable sector checks on file. Verification was confirmed by the President.

5.b. Insurance Status
An active insurance quote is in place until mid-March 2026. The Board discussed obtaining two additional quotes prior to binding coverage to ensure proper alignment with nonprofit operations and program requirements.

Action Item: The President will obtain two additional insurance quotes for Board review.

5.c. Recruitment Planning

The Society is working with HR Advantage (free of service) to recruit:
• Executive Director (Level 3)
• Early Childhood Educators Level 1 and Level 2

HR Advantage (Janel Representative) reported strong applicant interest, including local educators not currently employed within the Fort Macleod community, but living in the community. The Board discussed collaboration with Hand in Hand Child Care Services to support educators seeking full-time employment hours, strengthening retention within the community. Upon closing of postings, a formal motion will appoint two (2) Board members to participate in interviews for the Executive Director and educator roles to ensure governance integrity.

6. New Business

6.a. Grant Applications and Funding Activity

- FCSS Grant Awarded: The Society was awarded grant funding from FCSS Fort Macleod. The President met with the FCSS Coordinator to review funding agreements, reporting requirements, and receipt tracking obligations.
- Fort Macleod Lions – AGLC Funding: The Fort Macleod Lions are utilizing AGLC funding to support the sleep and rest room designated for infants within the Kinder Roots facility. The Board confirmed funds will be allocated specifically to this purpose. The Society will provide receipts and ensure compliance with all funding requirements. The Board expressed appreciation and looks forward to continuing partnership with the Lions in the future, including volunteering our time in their community programs.
- Fort Macleod Rotary Funding Awarded: The President and Secretary attended a Rotary meeting and requested funding support for the outdoor play space. The Rotary Club awarded $8,000 toward the creation of a natural outdoor play environment. Rotary requested formal recognition. The Board agreed to: Install prominent signage at the outdoor play space, Provide photographs upon completion, Publicly recognize Rotary once the project is completed and weather permits
- Town of Fort Macleod – Grants to Organizations: On February 23, 2026, the Society was awarded $2,000 from the Town of Fort Macleod. These funds will assist with startup

programming costs and long-term sustainability efforts.

The Board expressed appreciation for all funding partners and reaffirmed its commitment to fiscal responsibility and sustainable purchasing decisions. Community partners are being recognized through social media, the website, and future formal acknowledgments after 1-year at our formal grand opening.

The Board confirmed its ongoing commitment to sourcing nonprofit funding to support long-term strategic community goals.

6.b. Kinder Roots Program Status

The President confirmed:

• Application receipt by Child Care Connect on December 9, 2025
• Review correspondence received January 8, 2026

Outstanding items include: Final Alberta Health Services inspection (pending furnishing completion), Second fire inspection and sign-off, Determination of childcare fees in alignment with regional guidelines

The Society has consulted Alberta Childcare Ventures for support and guidance as we move from our strong start-up operational supports model, to strictly a governance model with an Executive Director. Submission of all final licensing documentation is targeted for the first week of March 2026, with a Friday deadline. Once submitted, licensing review may take up to 30 days, after which a licensing officer will conduct a final visit. All other licensing components are complete including programming, policies and procedures, etc.

6.c. Renovations – 1819 2nd Avenue

Renovations have been completed (new flooring, painting, spaces within the facility, etc.). The Board formally acknowledged significant in-kind contributions, including: Materials, Labour, Equipment and Waived rental fees by Landlord until licensing and enrollments commence.

These contributions substantially reduced capital and operating costs and were entered into official record by the Board to ensure fiscal responsibility by the Society, and as a new non-profit.

Motion to formally acknowledge the in-kind contributions by Lee Holfeld, seconded by Jesse Syrowitz. Outcome: Carried unanimously.

6.d. Partnerships and Community Engagement

The Board identified several outreach initiatives:

• WA Day Parent School Council – Jesse Syrowitz to connect on behalf of the Society
• Attendance at Interagency Meetings facilitated by Fort Macleod Community Support Services
• Participation in a May Resource Day event put forward by FCSS.

The Board reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening local collaboration, supporting economic development, assisting employers, and promoting rural early childhood education opportunities.

6.e. Website and Communications

The Board reviewed www.fortmacleodearlylearning.com. Recent updates include:

- Enhanced showcasing of programs in our community
- Stronger integration with Hand in Hand Child Care Services
- Improved visibility of registration processes and access to childcare and resources in the rural community
- Increased website traffic

The Board discussed posting meeting minutes and agendas publicly for transparency.

Additionally, the Board discussed outreach to the local school division (LRSD) to:

- Introduce the Society
- Support youth employment pathways
- Explore structured workplace experience programs

The President will reach out to Robert C., who facilitates work experience and distance learning placements, to explore requirements for employer participation within the early childhood education sector.

7. Meeting Schedule Planning

A scheduling poll will be circulated to determine availability for March 2026.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Laura Yunick, seconded by Lee Holfeld.
Outcome: Carried.
Meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Unapproved Meeting Minutes Prepared by: Mackenzie Hengerer, President In lieu of Secretary Keeley Odney

Date prepared: February 25, 2026

Approved on March 27th, 2026 @ the Board Meeting