

**ASHLAND GENERAL
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
March 6, 2025**

Ad Hoc Committee on Early Learning and Affordable Childcare

I. Call to Order

Call to order at 11:03am

Members present: Verner, Therkelsen, Hyatt, Keller-Hand, Love, Ransford, Seward

Council liaison present: Bloom

Staff liaison present: Gooden

1. Approval of draft minutes from 2.6.2025

Motion made to approve minutes of 2.6.2025

Motion: Love Second: Therkelsen

All ayes - motion passed

II. Election of Committee Chair

Committee members provided and discussed nominations for committee chair.

Motion made to elect Love as Committee Chair

Motion: Hyatt Second: Keller-Hand

All Ayes - Motion Passed.

Staff Liaison will send a link to committee members regarding a free training webinar on public meeting law offered by LOC

III. Public Forum

none

IV. Business engagement work plan

Committee discussed:

- Chamber of Commerce responded they could not release business list information - committee discussed alternatives.
- The committee's childcare initiative was discussed as a priority at a recent Council retreat - ad-hoc committee will likely be extended for one year to June 30, 2026 - discussed provider reliance on public funding.
- Economic development is anticipated to be prioritized - discussion of the possibility of childcare/early learning as a subcommittee for any economic development committee that may be created: create draft proposal by Dec. 2025.
- Communication to and from providers regarding changes and promotion of the childcare grant initiative. Keller-Hand and Hyatt to contact providers about sending letters of support of the City Council.
- Discussed positive impacts on families and ongoing provider need for assistance with behavioral issues.

- Discussed how to cultivate future funding for childcare grants, such as with an endowment fund, and approaching Rogue Federal and Evergreen Bank to explore possible financial tools.
- Members discussed developing a list of questions as a business survey, including larger non-profit organizations such as OSF, Chamber, SOU and ASD- discussed developing a subcommittee for this. Verner and Therkelsen agreed to draft ideas for discussion April meeting.
- Discussed how to incentivize summer programs.
- Hyatt participated in an interview with the Childrens Institute in Portland: <https://childinst.org/our-work-in-early-childhood-development/communications/podcasts/>
- Staff Liaison will bring this to City Manager's Office for consideration regarding publishing on City's website or otherwise.

V. Discussion of draft article for the Southern Oregon Business Journal

Committee discussed edits for this draft. Love would like to finalize within a week so Committee can develop a recommendation to Council to publish in Southern Oregon Business Journal and elsewhere as appropriate. Committee discussed adding a call to action for what businesses can do to further this work and an 'open invitation' to business owners for their perspective. Committee also discussed rendering a condensed version after finalization for additional distribution as appropriate.

VI. New Business

Seward spoke about the Make a Circle Documentary by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

NAEYC is celebrating its Week of the Young Child April 5-11. Seward received a license for this documentary and will be setting up screenings at the library and is considering other venues such as SOU, RCC, and Mountain Meadows
- makeacirclefilm.com

Committee discussed this may be a great preface for any endowment fund discussions.

Therkelsen spoke about Trusted Homes Community Land Trust (<https://trustedhomesclt.org>) and the Sunstone Housing Collaborative (<https://sunstonehc.org/>) and their efforts for the potential development near the high school including plans for an onsite childcare center. THCLT is co-applying for grants in conjunction with Ooregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) to include spots for infants and toddlers.

VII. Adjournment

Adjourned at 12:10pm