



General Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND GENERAL

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING AGENDA

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 10:30 AM

I. Call to Order

1. Confirm quorum present
2. Approval of draft minutes of 8.7.25 meeting (see agenda packet)
3. Suggested additions to today's agenda
4. Brief announcements

II. Public Forum

III. Continuation of Business from Previous Meeting

1. Status of the \$135,000 in Affordability grants awarded– Kerrick
 - a. Ashland Family YMCA - \$50,000
 - b. Avery Street Preschool - \$30,000
 - c. Mountain Star Preschool - \$20,000
 - d. Ella's Classroom AKA ABC Montessori - \$35,000
2. "Mind the Gap": Strategies for filling gap in childcare slots due to closing of Children's World Montessori – Paula and John
3. Update chart about progress on the committee's goals (see agenda packet)
4. Business engagement work plan—finalize(?) questionnaire and plan (see agenda packet)
 - a. Questions asked
 - b. Businesses to be approached
 - c. Key information that can be disseminated after analysis of responses
 - d. Plan for completing interviews
5. Cultivating future funding

IV. New Business

1. TBD

V. Adjournment to October 2 Meeting - Yom Kippur

1. Committee members' suggestions of additional topics
2. Adjournment

If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Kerrick Gooden at citymanageroffice@ashlandoregon.gov or 541.488.6002 (TTY phone number 1.800.735.2900). Notification at least three business days before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**ASHLAND GENERAL
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING
SISKIYOU ROOM – 51 WINBURN WAY – 10:30 AM
MINUTES
August 7, 2025**

These are DRAFT minutes until approved by the committee.

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 10:35am

Members Present: Paula Hyatt, John Love, Lynn Ransford, Anne Sebanc, Nancy Seward, and Lisa Verner (by zoom)

Council Liaison Present: Dylan Bloom

Staff Liaison Present: Kerrick Gooden

1. Confirm quorum present
confirmed

2. Approval of draft minutes of 7-3-25 meeting (see agenda packet)

Hyatt moved to approve the minutes of the 7.3.2025 meeting. Sebanc seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion passed.

3. Suggested additions to today's agenda
no additions

4. Brief announcements

A. HB 3560 passed (see agenda packet)

The committee discussed HB 3560, an expansion of approved childcare siting, and the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care's (DELIC) Every Child Belongs Program as support for providers needing behavioral support. Discussion also included existing (and expected) challenges to Head Start that may impact up to 4700 childcare slots, budget cuts to DELIC that may result in the loss of Preschool Promise slots, and Business Oregon announced its third round of funding for its [Child Care Infrastructure Fund \(CCIF\) grant program](#) will open on or about September 17, 2025, and that updated guidelines will be available by September 3, 2025.

II. Public Forum

none

III. Continuation of Business from July Meeting

1. Status of the three grants voted to award in July – Kerrick

Gooden updated the committee that that contracts have been completed with the three awardees selected from the last meeting - award checks are scheduled to send.

2. Revisit funding decision about Ella's Classroom/ABC Montessori

A. What we've learned about licensing

Love updated the committee regarding his site visit and conversation with Ella's Classroom LLC. The committee discussed that concerns over licensure have been alleviated and reflected on the scarcity of childcare seats in the community.

B. Vote on granting funds

The committee discussed that fencing has been confirmed to be in place and clarified that, if awarded, grant funds should only be used for playground infrastructure improvements, including shade trees and related expenses, rather than kitchen improvements.

Hyatt moved to award Ellas Classroom LLC \$35K in grant funds to support the development of playground infrastructure in the 25/26 funding cycle. Motion was seconded by Ransford. Roll Call Vote: Hyatt, Love, Verner, Sebanc, Ransford, Seward - YES. Motion Passed.

3. Business engagement work plan—finalize questionnaire and plan – Lisa (see agenda packet)

The committee discussed working on this between now and the year's end for reporting to the Council. Further discussion was postponed for other items.

Gooden will send the Ashland Family YMCA's year-end report to committee members for review.

A. Questions asked

B. Businesses to be approached

C. Key information that can be disseminated after analysis of responses

D. Plan for completing interviews

4. Update chart about progress on the committee's goals. (see agenda packet)

The committee discussed working on this between now and the year's end for reporting to the Council. Further discussion was postponed for other items.

IV. New Business

1. Strategies for filling gap in childcare slots due to closing of Children's World Montessori – Paula

The committee discussed the announced closure of Children's World Montessori and how to connect interested providers in the space and/or hard assets that will result.

A. First Presbyterian Church

The committee discussed that the Board of the First Presbyterian Church is interested in maintaining a childcare provider in their space and will meet the following Wednesday for discussion. Love and Hyatt will make connections with a provider that may be interested.

B. Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

The committee discussed that the Board of Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is in the early stages of considering the viability of housing a preschool program.

V. Adjournment to September 4 Meeting

1. Any needed followup on Business Engagement Work Plan
2. Discussion of progress on the committee's goals
3. Continue discussion of cultivating future funding
4. Committee members' suggestions of additional topics

Various topics were suggested for future discussion, including:

- Checking in on the Oregon Child Development Center at the Briscoe location
- Changes at the Ashland School District due to declining enrollment
- The potential for co-locating childcare at a proposed senior housing project at Southern Oregon University
- The potential for an Economic Development Advisory Committee to Council and/or making the Affordable Childcare committee permanent rather than ad-hoc, and;
- Drafting a charter for such a committee for Council consideration

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36am

Ad Hoc Committee on Affordable Childcare and Early Learning

Progress on Short- and Longer-Term Goals

September 5, 2024

Suggested updates (deleted or added in red) for discussion at September 4, 2025 committee meeting

SHORT-TERM GOALS		
Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
1. Advocate at the state level for Preschool Promise slots to be made available to programs currently licensed and operating in Ashland. A traditional Preschool Promise class supports 18 children. Having 18 Preschool promise slots would be a significant asset to our community and help greatly in supporting Ashland working families. Preschool Promise supports families earning at or below 200% of the FPL with free early learning opportunities.	The committee has not done specific lobbying yet, but the Ashland Family YMCA has received state funding for ____ Preschool Promise slots.	Reach out to Children's World and the other Ashland childcare providers to inform them about the process for applying for Promise Preschool funding. SUGGEST DELETING GIVEN STATE'S REDUCTION IN PROMISE PRESCHOOL FUNDING?
2. Engage local businesses to assess their employees' needs, and investigate potential partnerships	Committee members published "The Economics of Musical Chairs" in the local online Ashland.news, April 2024. Final version of article for Southern Oregon Business Journal approved at 4-3-25 meeting;	Prepare article for Southern Oregon Business Journal that would expand on the Ashland.news article. John spoke with founder/editor Jim Teece, and he's eager to accept our submission. Aim for about 2,000 words (at least twice as long as the April article). John will bring a draft outline to the committee's September 4 meeting.

SHORT-TERM GOALS		
Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
	City Council approved for distribution at May 6 Council meeting. Article submitted to Southern Oregon Business Journal and published online 5/6/25: “Business and Childcare: A Crucial Symbiosis”	Distribute article more widely. As part of what we call our Business Engagement Work Plan, committee members will interview local employers and a sample of employees to assess the nature and extent of the impact that employees’ difficulty finding affordable childcare has on business operations.
3. Improve public awareness of early learning programs currently available in Ashland.	The team worked with a variety of partners, including SOESD, EQQUS Work Force Solutions, Business Oregon, SBDC, ODHS, DELC, and multiple local providers (see #4).	Continue reaching out to these partners as the committee expands its work. Also see #5. Are there specific things we can do?
4. Work with providers to ensure they are aware of grant opportunities and business development opportunities that support their long-term viability.	Committee chair Paula Hyatt reached out to all local, licensed providers (including YMCA, Children’s World), Business Oregon, Asante, and local movers and shakers (including Peter Buckley, SOU President Richard Bailey, Cynthia Anderson) to ensure awareness of the city’s Affordability Grant program announcement and the state’s DELC/Business Oregon Childcare	Continue reaching out to all these providers and organizations as the committee learns about new grant- and business-development opportunities. Reach out to local providers to ensure they are aware that the third round of DELC/Business Oregon Childcare Infrastructure Grant opportunity is coming in September 2025.

SHORT-TERM GOALS		
Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
	Infrastructure Grant opportunity in August/September 2024. In late March 2025, forwarded Business Oregon's 3-26-25 announcement of second round of Child Care Infrastructure Fund grants to YMCA, Children's World, SOU, Food Coop, Sunstone, and others. In June 2025 reached out to all local, licensed providers to ensure they knew about the City's Affordability Grants application availability. At July 3 and August 7, 2025 meetings, voted to award \$135,000 in grants to four Ashland preschool/childcare providers.	
5. Engage Ashland's Community Development department regarding land use for early learning programs and how we can best support providers looking to locate programs in our city.	Chair Hyatt and committee member Verner met with Sunstone, and Hyatt also facilitated a meeting between the Sunstone's ED and Sunny Spicer and her team at Oregon Center for Creative Learning.	Work with Community Development to get a "place at the table" in connection with the group involved in planning the Croman Mills housing development. Explore with them possibilities for including a childcare center in that development. Advocate for one that could (a) serve <u>all</u> the children, 0-5 years of age, who might reasonably be expected in the number of families who would reside in the new development and (b) be located convenient to RVTD's expected bus line. Also determine the agency/organization/business that could apply for a grant in the next round of Child

SHORT-TERM GOALS		
Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
		Care Infrastructure Program funding, and support them in submitting an application.
6. Explore strategies for colocating childcare and affordable housing.	NA	Include colocation plans in the application coming out of #5. Meet with SOU President Bailey or his designee regarding the project they have in the works replacing an old dorm with senior housing to explore childcare colocation.
LONGER-TERM GOALS		
1. Investigate, and support, development opportunities in infant and toddler care in Ashland.	Recommended that Children's World receive full funding requested for the city's Affordability Grant because of CW's offering of toddler care slots.	See short term goal #5.
2. Investigate, and support, development opportunities in care for children with special needs in Ashland.	Advocated for the city to continue its Affordability Grant Program into the next biennium, and if possible, increase funding to reach more families enrolling children with special needs.	Advocate for the city to continue its Affordability Grant Program into the next biennium, and if possible, increase funding to reach more families enrolling children with special needs.

SHORT-TERM GOALS		
Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
3. Investigate, and support, development opportunities to expand childcare availability for all children in Ashland.	In July 2025, connected with the First Presbyterian Church to see how we could assist with replacing Children's World Montessori that went out of business. Engaged with the Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship to support their interest in potentially converting unused space into a preschool center.	Continue supporting the two churches by reaching out to other providers who may have the capacity to rent space for a new childcare facility.
4. Cultivate future funding.	Therkelsen and Love met with Kurt Hildebrand and Shasta Zieke of the Oregon Community Foundation to discuss options for endowment partnerships and donor-advised funds. Hildebrand attended the committee's May 1 meeting to discuss several possibilities. (Childcare is one of OCF's top priorities.)	Consider establishing a nonprofit organization to solicit donations and grants. Talk with OCF's Special Gifts Officer.

**Ad Hoc Committee on Affordable Childcare and Early Learning
BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT WORK PLAN**

MORE DETAIL (fits into BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT WORK PLAN
outline Version 3 minor updates for 8/7/25):

Questions to ask businesses:

1. Are you (the business) impacted by childcare?
2. Does childcare impact your ability to retain employees? Does it impact absenteeism?
3. Do you offer “tuition” or to help with tuition for childcare for your employees? What other assistance do you offer?
4. Do you have room onsite for a childcare facility? If someone else was willing to run a childcare program, would you be willing to have it onsite?
5. Would you join a group of employers to provide or to subsidize childcare for your employees?
6. If an endowment were created to support/subsidize childcare slots in Ashland, would you contribute to it? Annually?
7. What else would you like to tell us about how businesses (your business) are impacted by childcare?
8. Have work schedules been altered and/or rearranged to accommodate an employee’s childcare needs?
9. How many employees do you have?

Questions to ask employees:

10. Demographic information
11. Do you use childcare? What type of childcare do you use? (center childcare facility, home-based childcare, babysitter/nanny, family member, other)
12. Has your attendance at work or your work performance been affected by childcare issues? What are the biggest challenges?

Businesses to contact:

Retail

- a. Paddington family of stores (owners: Pam & Kelly Jean Hammond and Joe Collins)
- b. TC Chevy: (owner: Alan DeBoer)
- c. Butler Ford:
- d. ACE Hardware: Tim Ringer (541) 482-3476
- e. Bi-Mart: Eric Chaddock (541) 535-1566
- f. Blue Marble: Jordan Willing, Owner and CEO
- g. Organic Alcohol Co: (541) 201-1050

- h. Rogue Credit Union:
- i. Evergreen Bank: Marsha Billeci, Branch Manager, mbilleci@evergreenfederal.bank
- j.

Education

- a. SOU: VP for Finance & Administration Dr Carson Howell? Human Resources AVP for DEI?
- b. Ashland School District: Dr Joseph Hattrick, Superintendent
- c.

Government

- a. City of Ashland: Resources Director, Molly Taylor
- b. United States Post Office
- c.

Food

- a. Market of Choice: owner & CEO Rick Wright
- b. Ashland Food Coop: Nick Hardy, GM
- c. Albertsons: Don Kennedy Store Director, (541) 482-6320
- d. Safeway: Malcolm (no last name) Store Manager (541) 482-7777
- e.

Health related

- a. Asante Community Hospital: Kristin Roy, SVP and Legal Counsel
- b. RiteAid:
- c. Ashland Drug:
- d. YMCA: Heidi Hill, CEO
- e.

Entertainment

- a. Oregon Shakespeare Festival:
- b. Cabaret Theatre

Manufacturing

- a. Darex: David Bernard
- b. BioSkin: Scott Shumway, company president
- c. Scharffen Berger Chocolate (part of Harry & David but produces locally): Chris Spirko, General Manager