

**ASHLAND GENERAL
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING
MINUTES**

September 4, 2025

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 10:30 AM

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 10:31am

Present were: Paula Hyatt, Jessica Therkelsen, Joanie Keller-Hand, Anne Sebanc, John Love, and Lisa Verner

1. Confirm quorum present

Confirmed

2. Approval of draft minutes of 8.7.25 meeting (see agenda packet)

Verner moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Sebanc. All ayes. Motion passed.

3. Suggested additions to today's agenda

There were no additions

4. Brief announcements

II. Public Forum

None

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

Gooden provided an update to the committee that the four Affordable Childcare Grant Program award checks have been issued

2. "Mind the Gap": Strategies for filling gap in childcare slots due to closing of Children's World Montessori – Paula and John

- Love spoke with leaders of the Presbyterian Church who would like to find renters for the space previously occupied by Children's World. The committee discussed the need for preschool slots in the community and will connect interested parties.
- The committee discussed the Unitarian Church is exploring its options for renting out its space to a childcare program.
- The committee discussed reaching out to any local entities that have received a grant from the state's Child Care Infrastructure Fund to better understand their plans and goals.
- Love reached out to Rogue Community College for data on childcare provider graduation rates and placement strategies to learn more about the potential supply of qualified staff. He is waiting for information.
- The committee discussed reaching out to Tom Cole with Kids Unlimited - Love will reach out and update the committee.
- The Southern Oregon University board is expected to decide later this month regarding the planned Senior Center that may co-locate early learning opportunities.

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

- The committee reviewed and discussed these goals — members will send Love updates / notes
- Goal #1 - Ashland Family YMCA received 7 preschool promise slots at Talent site which are available to Ashland Families
- Goal #3 - Ongoing with Mind the Gap conversation and efforts to connect providers with partners and resources
- Recent zoning changes now allow for more siting options
- The committee reflected that some previous long-term goals are now being addressed by the committee's work

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

The committee discussed learning about a business collaboration in Grants Pass for guaranteed childcare spots that Deputy City Manager Rooklyn may know about. Gooden will follow up with Rooklyn for more information.

5. Cultivating future funding

The committee revisited forming a nonprofit organization, separate from the committee, that would be able to receive grants and work with the Oregon Community Foundation if an endowment fund could be established there. The Parks Foundation was considered as a model to consider and discussed reaching out to Mike Gardiner to learn more.

IV. New Business

- 1. TBD

none

V. Adjournment to October 2 Meeting - Yom Kippur

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11.37AM