

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

October 2, 2025

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 10:30 AM

I. Call to Order

Present:

Committee members- Paula Hyatt, Lisa Verner, Joanie Keller-Hand, Anne Seban, Lynn Ransford, and John Love.
Staff liaison- Kerrick Gooden

1. Confirm quorum present

Confirmed

2. Approval of draft minutes of 9.4.25 meeting (see agenda packet)

Verner moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Hyatt. All Ayes. Motion passed.

3. Suggested additions to today's agenda

none

4. Brief announcements

- a. SOU budget cuts eliminate Early Childhood Development major

- b. But RCC still graduating prospective ECE teachers

- c. Business Oregon's Child Care Infrastructure Fund grant program application period is open; closes December 16

- d. Other?

Seban clarified that it is SOU's Early Childhood Development *Minor* that was removed, not the major. The committee discussed RCC's early learning program that can prepare students for SOU's major, and the importance of regional collaboration and coordination for preparing professionals in the field.

The committee discussed having heard that not many families are applying for the YMCA scholarships available through the City's grant, despite actual enrollment at the YMCA having increased, and discussed following up to support access to funds.

II. Public Forum

none

III. Continuation of Business from Previous Meetings

1. "Mind the Gap": Strategies for filling gap in childcare slots due to closing of Children's World Montessori

- a. Status of Presbyterian Church and UU Fellowship

The Presbyterian Church found a renter: Rogue Valley Educational Services, which operates Nature Kids Academy and Rogue Valley Preschool and Aftercare. The committee discussed reaching out to this provider regarding the committee's work and offerings and to add them to the committee's childcare program census. John gave info about CCIF to UU Fellowship but has not heard back. The committee discussed recent interest from a local developer in acquiring a City-owned property for building a children's theater with the hope that plans will include childcare offerings.

2. Business engagement work plan

- a. Grants Pass: Oregon Center for Creative Learning

The committee discussed the recent news that Dutch Brothers donated its headquarters in Grants Pass to the Oregon Center for Creative Learning (OCCL) — the umbrella organization for the Southern Oregon Children's Museum and the Ivy School. The committee discussed how the committee's business engagement plan might support similar collaboration in Ashland. Successful operating strategies were discussed, such as how the Ivy school uses locations provided as in-kind contributions — they bring value to space, but aren't paying rent. This is similar to how the YMCA holds space in the Ashland School District (ASD) at the Walker and Helman school sites. The committee discussed exploring with ASD regarding other space that might be available for more preschool offerings in Ashland, and the concept of a community learning hub.

3. Cultivating future funding

- a. Oregon Community Foundation – Endowment? Or?

- b. Model of Ashland Parks Foundation

The committee discussed its limitations as an advisory body and the potential for an endowment with the Oregon Community Foundation and other options that might be able to offer financial support for affordable childcare in Ashland after the ad-hoc committee winds down. Options would require a non-profit entity and about \$3 million in

seed funding to do the type of grants that have been offered through the City. Hyatt and Love have a meeting scheduled with the Parks Foundation to better understand how that is working.

The committee discussed how a group might form outside of this ad-hoc committee to continue this work and either:

- 1) create its own non-profit;
- 2) come in to support under the umbrella of something like the Parks Foundation; and/or
- 3) come in to support through the school district and/or Ashland Schools Foundation

IV. New Business

1. TBD

The committee discussed having been focused on increasing the supply of affordable childcare and considered reassessing the current local need with the news of decreased applications for the YMCA scholarships.

V. Adjournment

1. Rescheduling first Thursday in January (New Year's Day)

The committee decided to not meet in January of 2026.

2. Continuation of today's business

Love and Hyatt will update the committee after meeting with the Parks Foundation, and will look into meeting with the Ashland Schools Foundation.

3. Committee members' suggestions of additional topics

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:31AM