

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

November 6, 2025

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 10:30-11:30AM

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10.34am.

Present were Committee Members Lisa Verner, Anne Seban, Nancy Seward, Lynn Ransford, John Love, and Jessica Therkelsen (by Zoom).

Also present: Council Liaison Dylan Bloom and Staff Liaison Kerrick Gooden.

1. Confirm quorum present

Confirmed

2. Approval of draft minutes of 10.2.25 meeting (see agenda packet)

Seward moved to approve the minutes. Ransford seconded the motion. All ayes - motion passed.

3. Suggested additions to today's agenda

Request to add an item to discuss regular reports from grant recipients - will be added to New Business.

4. Brief announcements

none

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
 - b. Siskiyou School

The committee discussed the recent closing of a childcare program at the Presbyterian Church, and that a previously interested provider decided not to rent the space. Seward will reach out to Little Sprouts directly to see if they would be interested, as they previously attended a committee meeting and expressed interest in expanding into Ashland. The committee discussed various educational models, their organizational structures, and what might qualify for future funding under the City's grant program.

The Siskiyou School had expressed interest in expanding with a prekindergarten program, but has not made any decisions.

The committee considered how to reassess local supply and demand. Rene Brandon with SOESD's Early Learning Hub might have this data, and the committee considered reviewing Ashland School District projections regarding enrollment. A recent review of this data for kindergarten enrollment was 136 for 2022, 150 for 2023, 150 for 2024, and 131 for 2025 with low-level future projections for this enrollment number to remain below 140. These numbers may be useful as the number of children at each age in the couple of years before kindergarten is likely to be similar to the kindergarten enrollment.

2. Business Engagement work plan

The committee discussed ideas for reaching out to employers regarding childcare needs, including the committee-developed survey. The committee reviewed its removal of survey items asking for sensitive information from employers (such as number of children in a household), and there was a suggestion to shift the focus to be more anecdotal. The committee discussed whether to explore the possibility of a wide-reaching push with something like Survey Monkey through the City's communications channels or to reach out directly to businesses and/or families after the holidays and decided to reengage this topic at December's meeting.

3. Cultivating future funding

- a. Meeting with Ashland Parks Foundation

Love shared that he and Hyatt met with Gardiner and Jensen to learn from their experience with the Parks Foundation in exploring the idea of establishing an endowment fund managed by something like the Oregon Community Foundation. Such an endowment would need a nonprofit to receive and manage funds and would require between \$3 - 4 Million to continue the committee's current grant program offerings. The committee considered the Ashland Schools Foundation as an established resource that has discussed co-locating employee housing with childcare as another resource to explore this with. Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Inc (SORED) was also discussed as potentially having data on employee/employer access to housing and childcare — Councilor Dahle is liaison to SORED and might know or could ask.

IV. New Business

1. What actually *is* the need for preschool/childcare seats in Ashland?

The 1st item was discussed under the 'Mind the Gap' discussion.

The 2nd item added to the agenda was to request reports from grant program recipients. The committee reviewed grant reporting requirements outlined in the grant narrative and reflected that strict quarterly reporting might not be warranted with the school year just then in full swing. Gooden will check with the City Manager's Office and Love as Committee Chair regarding necessary reporting requirements and send the request out to grant recipients. A report deadline of mid-January was suggested so the committee can review responses at its February meeting.

V. Adjournment to December 4, 2025 Meeting

1. Committee members' suggestions of topics in addition to continuation of today's discussions

The committee agreed that one focus of the next meeting would be finalizing and planning implementation of the business interviews.

2. Adjournment

The committee was adjourned at 11.34am