

**ASHLAND GENERAL
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING
MINUTES
May 7, 2026**

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 10:30 AM

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 am

In attendance were committee members Paula Hyatt, Lisa Verner, Joanie Keller-Hand, Anne Sebanc, John Love, and Jessica Therkeslen (via Zoom)

Also present was staff liaison Kerrick Gooden

1. Confirmation of quorum present

Confirmed

2. Approval of draft minutes of the 4/2/2026 meeting (see agenda packet)

Keller-Hand moved to approve the minutes. Sebanc seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion passed.

3. Suggested additions to today's agenda

4. Brief announcements

Therkelsen and Sebanc reported on having attended the Nonprofit Association of Oregon's Nonprofit Leaders Conference, held recently in Ashland. Therkelsen noted that representatives from United Way and others were in attendance, but no significant attention was given to preschool children or younger. Therkelsen agreed to reach out to Dee Anne Everson regarding some grant opportunities, and to ask how Jackson County United Way is addressing birth-to-age-5 childcare needs. Love reminded the committee that Governor Kotek took up the issue of pre-K childcare through an [Early Childhood Care and Learning System](#) Roundtable. Love and Hyatt will follow up on this.

II. Public Forum

None

III. Continuation of Business from Previous Meetings

1. Review City's Childcare Affordability Grants application (see agenda packet - Paula)

1. Are any changes needed?
2. Process for reaching out to potential applicants

The committee reviewed the updates to the Affordable Childcare Grant program for 2026/27, as approved at the last meeting, and asked Gooden to launch the program with an application deadline of June 19, 2026:

Love moved to release the Affordable Childcare Grant Program with an application deadline of June 19, 2026 for review at the following meeting. Hyatt seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

2. Discussion of potential partnering with the Ashland Schools Foundation (Paula)

Hyatt briefed the committee on her meeting with ASD Superintendent Joseph Hatrick. Hatrick expressed interest in supporting a charter change with the Ashland Schools Foundation to include pre-K support, and explained this process would take time. Committee discussion included that this was the last year for this funding allocation, the potential to allocate some or all of the remaining childcare funding towards ASF, the relative impacts to potential applicants of the grant program, and outcomes as reported by providers who have benefited from the program to date.

3. Appeal to the Ashland Planning Commission (see agenda packet - Lisa)

The committee discussed narrowing the scope of this appeal to the planning commission to just the Ashland Mills Development for considering childcare / early learning opportunities during development review (see agenda packet).

4. Business engagement plan

1. Who are the key business leaders we should engage?
2. What do we want to learn?
3. What is our ask?

Not addressed due to time

5. Updating data on existing early learning/childcare slots in Ashland (Nancy)
no update

IV. New Business

1. Potential partnering with the Ashland Community Health Foundation (John)

V. Anticipation of June 4, 2026 Meeting

1. Continue discussion of potential with the ASF or ACHF.
2. Planning Commission
3. Suggestions for other topics

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33am