

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
Early Learning Ad Hoc Committee Minutes
Thursday, December 7, 2023
Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way

In attendance: Lisa Verner, John Love, Dylan Bloom, Paula Hyatt, Alissa Kolodzinski.

4:00 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.

1. Update on Pilot Grant Program
 - Paula Hyatt provided a recap of ERDC and the state of childcare providers.

2. Update on Current Childcare Crisis Call webinar– Held on November 30th.
 - Review of presentation on the 30th which Rene Brandon, Director of Southern Oregon Early Learning Services, provided, along with follow up information in an email. In summary, there are significant staffing issues, and concerns with child behavior since COVID. Where are we seeing progress and what are we doing right? Review was conducted of Josephine and Jackson rural counties. There is some success, and they want to build on it. Sunny Spicer at the Ivy School in Medford stated the Ivy School and Children’s Museum work very closely together. A key piece is Preschool Promise, and they get a percentage of the revenue of the Museum. The Ivy School has satellite locations in Ruch, Talent, Jacksonville, and several in Medford. There was a review of how Ashland as a municipality is helping with early childhood providers. The financial model does not work.

- Biggest 3 issues
 1. Availability of care for those with disabilities
 2. Toddler and infant care
 3. Evening or off hours

3. Early Learning Environment – Review of Ashland Programs

- Develop initial assessment of the environment
- Identify Strengths, Challenges, Gaps & Opportunities

- Strengths
 - Strong presence of half day programs
- Challenges
 - Zoning
 - How to ensure that the families that benefited from the grant this year don't lose their stops next year?
- Gaps
 - Toddler and infant care
 - Lack of full day programs
 - Stop gap to those on wait list at the ERDC
- Opportunities
 - Spread the word about grant (if we go that direction)
 - Could we go with an endowment structure to provide long-term funding
 - Is there an existing funding model we can model after?
 - Raise awareness on the need for childcare and how it affects this community.
 - Survey local businesses to find out their employee childcare needs
 - Work with Rotary for potential funding.
 - Conversation with Evergreen Bank

- How to engage businesses – ask Renee Brandon
- How to partner a provider with a facility?
- Set restrictions to limit grants to full-day programs and/or toddler and infant care.
- Inform providers of business resources offered by the Chamber
- Preschool Promise slots

4. Adjournment

Next Meeting January 4th, 2024 – 4pm (subsequently cancelled)

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