

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
MASSACHUSETTS

CHILDCARE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting  
Monday, February 24, 2025 at 12PM

1. The meeting was called to order at 12:00pm by Ruby Chang, both in-person and on Zoom.
2. Members in attendance: Ruby Chang, Kate Van Olst, Mary Stephen, Ryan Sears, Meredith Smyth, and Jenise Lucy. Members absent: Kate Tucci and Aretha Whitehead. The members introduced themselves.
3. The Charter of the Childcare Committee was read - attached, see second page.
4. Election of Officers
  - a. K. Van Olst made a motion to nominate Meredith Smyth for Clerk. Ryan Sears seconded, approved by unanimous vote.
  - b. M. Smyth made a motion to nominate K. Van Olst for Chair. R. Sears seconded, approved by unanimous vote.
5. Discussion of the scope of childcare options and needs in Great Barrington and Southern Berkshire communities. The consensus of the committee was to focus on children from birth to age 18, and include childcare options in the area including towns from Lenox and south.
6. Discussion of the barriers to accessing childcare faced by community members, including: availability, financial burden, transportation, cultural and language, and general awareness of programs.
7. Discussion of the CLEO program at Berkshire Hills Regional School District. It provides free after school programs for students in the district, but is threatened by a lack of grant funding.
8. Discussion of the lack of options for childcare for infants and toddlers. K Van Olst mentioned that programs exist in other states to support potential Home Day Care providers get the training and support they need to open new programs.
9. Discussion of how the Childcare Committee could focus on solutions, including: identifying possible funding sources, exploring public/private partnerships, gathering useful statistics, and highlighting obstacles such as staffing shortages.
10. Future Meetings - next meeting will be March 24, 2025 at 12:00pm at the Mason Library.
11. M. Smyth made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:03pm. Seconded by R. Sears, approved by unanimous vote.