

**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS**  
**Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board**  
Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ryan Brown	Town of Blackfalds Councilor
Cory Twerdoclib	Town of Blackfalds Councilor
Dena Thomas	Public at Large
Jessalyn Parsons	Public at Large
Heather Johnson	Public at Large
Auralei Agrey	Public at Large
Glenda Brown	Public at Large
Kimberly Burrell	Public at Large
Michelle Meadows	Public at Large

**ATTENDING**

Sawyer Hick	Town of Blackfalds FCSS Manager
Erin Dahl	Town of Blackfalds FCSS Admin Assistant

**OTHERS ATTENDING**

**REGRETS**

Jim Sands	Town of Blackfalds Councilor
Gloricel Cayago	Public at Large

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Thomas welcomed all attending, introduced Councilors Brown and Twerdoclib. The Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board Meeting was to order at 7:02 pm. Member Johnson moved that the Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board approved the agenda. Member Glenda Brown Seconded the motion.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

N/A

**DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

N/A

**TREATY SIX LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

A Land Acknowledgement was read to recognize that the Town of Blackfalds is on Treaty Six territory.

**PRESENTATIONS**

N/A

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**BUSINESS**

**Approval of Minutes of November 20, 2025**

Member Thomas moved that the Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board recommends Council adopt the minutes from November 20, 2025, as presented.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Glenda nominated Dena Thomas as President, no other nominations, Dena accepted. Dena nominated Glenda Brown as Vice President, no other nominations, Glenda accepted.

**Approval of Minutes from November 20, 2025**

Member Jessalyn Parsons approved the November 20, 2026 meeting minutes.

**CARRIED**

**UNANIMOUSLY**

**SOCIAL SERVICES FRAMEWORK**

-Administration has discussed introducing framework policies across all divisions. These policies outline the key expectations, guiding principles, and decision-making parameters that shape how each division operates. By establishing this high-level direction, we create a consistent foundation that supports effective, efficient, and well-coordinated management practices. This Policy will ensure that Social Services policies and procedures are aligned with our broader organizational priorities and values.

-The purpose of this Policy is to establish clear guidelines for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of preventive and supportive social services within the Town of Blackfalds. This Policy aims to enhance the well-being of individuals and communities by providing equitable, accessible, and high-quality services that address the diverse needs of our population.

-Council is committed to fostering a resilient, inclusive, and supportive social environment that strengthens protective factors, reduces social risks, and builds community capacity. Through diverse, high-quality programs, the Town prioritizes equity, collaboration, and accountability to ensure long-term impact for current and future generations. Council provides strategic oversight and ensures resources are allocated to preventive social services that align with provincial legislation and community priorities.

*Questions from the board members and the councilor's regarding draft copy of Social Services Framework included: why the framework policy is so broad, where people go to for information and community referrals, wanting to look at the affordable housing needs of Blackfalds, would other agencies partner with FCSS to join and expand, survey for community needs in due 2027 would this survey beneficial, Bolt expansion or affordable transportation. Members would like a list of Social Services are not available and what services are being outsourced.*

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**SCOPE**

This Policy applies to social services including, but not limited to:

1. Community Supports: Programs that build resilience against housing insecurity, food insecurity and health challenges.
2. Capacity Building: Educational and vocational training, skill development, youth/family/senior supports.
3. Equity Initiatives: Programs addressing systemic barriers, culturally safe delivery, inclusion of marginalized groups.
4. Community Development: Partnerships, volunteerism, environmental sustainability, and resilience initiatives.

**AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Council to:

1. Adopt and support this Policy by resolution.
2. Consider the allocation of resources for the successful implementation of this Policy in the annual budget.

Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Advise Council on the development, implementation, and amendment of this Policy.
2. Ensure Policy review occurs and verify the implementation of this Policy.

Administration to:

1. Implement programs in alignment with this Policy.
2. Report annually to Council on program outcomes, risk management, and resource allocation.

**SOCIAL SERVICES FRAMEWORK**

By virtue of this Policy, the Town of Blackfalds Social Services strives to:

1. Ensure programs are accessible to all demographics, including marginalized or underserved groups.
2. Provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all individuals.
3. Build partnerships with local organizations, schools, health services, and businesses to maximize resources and impact.

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4. Ensure services are culturally sensitive, responsive, and inclusive to the diverse needs of the community.

5. Promote sustainable delivery that respects environmental, economic, and social factors.

6. Maintain transparency in decision-making, service goals and outcomes.

The goals and objectives of Social Services in relation to this framework Policy are to:

Ensure equitable access to preventive social services for all residents.

Promote community well-being by strengthening protective factors and reducing social risks.

Foster resilience and self-reliance through skill-building, education, and empowerment initiatives.

Reduce isolation and enhance social connection through engagement, volunteerism, and participation.

Advance equity and inclusion by addressing systemic barriers and promoting culturally safe service delivery.

This Policy establishes the foundation for a responsive, sustainable, and preventive Social Services system that strengthens community well-being and promotes equity, inclusion, and resilience.

Guided by this Policy and related documents, Social Services commits to:

1. Deliver equitable and inclusive programs and supports that respond to identified community needs.

2. Develop guidelines for planning, delivering, and evaluating social services to ensure consistency and quality.

3. Establish transparent funding priorities, considering severity of needs, impact, efficiency, and external opportunities.

4. Maximize the use of available resources to ensure sustainability and growth of social service offerings.

5. Engage stakeholders through consultation, forums, and collaborations with agencies and governments.

6. Set benchmarks and performance indicators to evaluate the success and impact of social service programs, supports and initiatives.

7. Identify potential risks in social service delivery (e.g., confidentiality, equity gaps, service duplication) and establish preventive measures that meet ethical and legal requirements.

8. Promote awareness of social services through outreach, advertising and social media platforms. Council Policy No- Social Services Framework Page

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9. Keep the community informed about programs, services, policies, and changes through clear and consistent communication.

10. Foster collaboration and partnerships with local organizations, schools, health services, and business to maximize impact and reduce duplication.

11. Support volunteerism and community capacity building as a cornerstone of social service sustainability. 12. Embed continuous improvement practices using evaluation findings and community feedback to refine programs annually.

**EXCLUSIONS**

Direct Assistance: The Town of Blackfalds Social Services does not provide direct financial assistance, clinical treatment, or crisis intervention beyond preventive scope. Residents requiring such support's will be referred to appropriate provincial or community agencies.

**SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

-Services may be adapted during public health emergencies, natural disasters, or other extraordinary circumstances to ensure continuity of preventive support's.

-Partnerships may be prioritized in situations where community needs exceed municipal capacity.

**AG SOCIETY REPORT**

Chair Thomas reported a meeting with Manager Hick and Ian from the Light House Project via online to discuss the project and the application from the Blackfalds Ag Society. Expecting an answer very soon on whether Blackfalds Ag Society was one of the 60 successful candidates. Light House Project is an initiative focused on mental health and resources aiming to help rural residents in Alberta.

**FCSS MANAGERS VERBAL UPDATE**

A draft copy of the Social Services Framework Policy was discussed and reviewed. The goal is to provide a Social Services Framework that is inclusive, accessible and fosters an environment that builds community capacity, strengthens protective factors, reduces barriers, while also ensuring programs and services align with provincial legislation and community priorities.

Manager Hick also talked about the Alberta government wanting FCSS managers to assess their FCSS programs to ensure they are following the provincial mandate. The programming is to be Prevention Focused in nature. These assessments will be completed later in the year. Manager Hicks feels confident after completing training on how to do proper evaluations at FCSSAA conference.

FCSS Grant applications are accepted until March 20,2026 and applications will be reviewed April 9/26 meeting. FCSS will provide a matrix to score applications.

**ACTION ITEMS**

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Board members and council would like a list of Social Services that are not available and what services are being outsourced.

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAMMER REPORT**

**December 2025**

#### **VOLUNTEER CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE**

To commemorate International Volunteer Day and thank volunteers/community groups. Drop-in event with hot chocolate pouch craft, pizza, hot chocolate bar, socializing, door prizes, and photo booth.

Attendance: 70 people, including 2 FCSS staff, 2 Councillors, Mayor Svab, and representatives from 11 organizations: Blackfalds Figure Skating Club, Friends of the Library, Heart of Blackfalds Society, Blackfalds Ag Society, Blackfalds Seniors Club, Blackfalds Food Bank, Optimist Club of Blackfalds, Ubaka, Care for Newcomers, BGC Wolf Creek.

Cross-department collaboration was essential due to short turnaround after Seniors Club booking.

#### **BUSINESS CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE**

Outcome: Collected **2,072.5 lbs of food** for Blackfalds Food Bank.

Participants: 14 businesses including Ash Tyndall Photography, Blackfalds Nutter's, Jade's Virtual Office Inc, Panache Compounding Pharmacy, Blackfalds Physiotherapy, Neighborhood Dental, Stride Physiotherapy, The Hitchin Post Blackfalds, Blackfalds Boston Pizza, Blackfalds Smiles, Little Star Playschool, Blackfalds Ag Society, Faith Community Church, Heart of Blackfalds Society.

**Volunteer Pairings:** 19 residents have been successfully paired with a Snow Angel volunteer.

**IN PROGRESS:** 1 resident is currently in the process of being paired, with volunteer coordination underway.

**WAITLIST:** 3 residents remain on the waitlist; 2 have been provided with a Snow Angel window sign through the expanded Neighborhood Snow Angel Program.

Town of Blackfalds volunteers were utilized at the following programs and events

Cooking Club: 2 volunteers, Leaders in Training: 6 volunteers

#### **ONGOING INITIATIVES:**

Monthly FCSS **Volunteer Newsletter**

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In December, 301 sends with an open rate of 53%

**UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY'S**

- Snow Angel Program for the winter months
- Winterfest February 16,2026

**2025 VOLUNTEER POSITIONS & HOUR STATS:**

**Total Volunteer positions filled:** 241

**Programs:** 74

**Event/Fundraisers:** 129

**Board, Committee, Commissions:** 38

**Total Town of Blackfalds Volunteer Hours:** 1858

**Programs:** 1031.5 hours

**Event/Fundraisers:** 400 hours

**Board, Committee, Commissions:** 426.5 hours

**TOWN VOLUNTEER SUPPORTING PROGRAMMING 2025:**

**CVITP:** 3 volunteers & 35 hours

**Reception Centre:** 9 volunteers & 154.5 hours

**Blackfalds Bike Rodeo:** 5 volunteers & 12.5 hours

**Abbey Centre Programming:**

**Jr. Lifeguard Volunteer Program:** 6 volunteers & 209.25 hours

**Camp Curious:** 8 volunteers & 213.75 hours

**Basketball Camp Facilitator:** 1 volunteer & 30 hours

**FCSS Youth Programming:**

**Youth Week:** 3 volunteers & 8 hours

**BYC & Cooking Club:** 5 volunteers & 18 hours

**Leaders in Training:** 6 volunteers & 70.5 hours

**Snow Angel Program:** 28 volunteers are supporting 18 locations & approx. 280 hours

**SENIOR 2025 FITNESS PROGRAMMING**

Five program sessions were offered in 2025, totaling 20 individual classes.

Registration grew by 161% compared to 2024, with 361 registered participants and 4 drop-ins attending. the free classes supported by Lacombe County grant funding and the Blackfalds Ag Society.

70% of participants were Blackfalds residents, while 29.6% came from outside Blackfalds and Lacombe County.

**Program capacity highlights:**

Friday Chair Yoga: 100% full Monday/Wednesday Yoga: 83% full Tuesday Fit & Functional: 95% full

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### NEW SENIOR SESSIONS 2025    **Seniors Educational & Engagement Sessions**

Throughout the year, FCSS partnered with various organizations to deliver practical information, skill-building opportunities, and community connection for seniors. Attendance and partnerships included:

- **Transitioning to Your Next Chapter: Selling Your Home**  
Partner: T. Kroetsch (Royal LePage) & Lacombe Foundation Attendance: 7
- **Wills & Estate Planning**  
Partner: Servus Credit Union Attendance: 17
- **Medication & Supplements: What Every Senior Needs to Know**  
Partner: Blackfalds Shoppers Drug Mart Attendance: 7
- **Tenant Rights & Responsibilities**  
Partner: Community Legal Clinic Attendance: 11
- **Nutritional Eating Classes with Cooking Opportunities**  
Partner: Alberta Health Services (AHS) Attendance: 12
- **Empowering Seniors: Elder Abuse Awareness**  
Partner: Law Enforcement, AHS, Sylvan Lake FCSS Attendance: 7
- **Watercolor Painting Classes**  
Hired Instructor Attendance: 9 (first class) & 8 (second class)
- **Aging in Place: Tips for Staying in Your Home Longer** Attendance: 25
- **Falls Prevention**  
Partners: Abbey Centre Fitness Staff, Lifeline Canada, Primary Care Network Attendance: 24

Sessions provided seniors with practical knowledge, creative outlets, and social engagement. Partnerships strengthened community collaboration and resource sharing.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMER REPORT        **December 2025**

- Continued focus on **keeping the brain playful and engaged** during walks.
- Activities included: **“Name That Smell” Challenge**: Participants identified scents (lemon, cinnamon, peppermint, vanilla) to stimulate memory and sensory recognition.  
**Festive Dance Corner**: Christmas music encouraged walkers to dance; popular songs included Elvis’ *Blue Christmas* and *Rock Around the Christmas Tree*. Inflatable Christmas tree costume added fun and photo opportunities.

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### **Special Year-End Activity**

Final December meeting featured a **draw for ten \$20 grocery gift cards** (donated by Blackfalds Save-On-Foods and Blackfalds IGA).

### **Community Connection**

Group continues to grow in numbers and social bonds. Heartwarming moment: A participant shared handmade ornaments created by his late wife, fostering connection and remembrance.

**Impact:** Program successfully promotes physical activity, mental engagement, and social connection for seniors.

Average of 23 walkers every Tuesday in December

We had 31 unique walkers during the month of December 77% of the walkers are from the Town of Blackfalds, 6% are from the City of Lacombe, 20% are from the County of Lacombe.

### **MORE THAN A MOVIE:**

29 movie guests Enjoyed the movie: The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.

26 Blackfalds residents, 1 resident of the City of Lacombe 2 residents from the County of Lacombe

**Activity:** Screening of a Christmas-themed movie about performing the Christmas Story at a local church.

**Impact:** Highly emotional and nostalgic; guests were moved to tears. The film reinforced the importance of community and tradition during the holiday season.

**Social Component:** Pizza lunch followed the movie; the hall was lively with conversation and joy.

Severe weather and a travel advisory caused multiple cancellations, especially from out-of-town seniors. Despite conditions, local seniors attended, demonstrating strong commitment to the program and desire for social connection. Seniors expressed the importance of gathering in a safe, welcoming space.

*The event highlighted the value of programs that foster community engagement and reduce isolation.*

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**CHRISTMAS BUREAU**

**December 8 Activities**

Assembly, labeling, and organization of hamper boxes.  
Hampers categorized into *family hampers* and *single/senior hampers*.  
Heavy” non-perishable food items were added to all hampers in the afternoon.

**December 9 Activities**

Volunteers, under FCSS supervision, added age-appropriate “little somethings” and gift cards to family hampers. In the afternoon, single/senior hampers were completed with comfort items (mugs, blankets, candles) based on household composition and gender.

**December 10 Activities**

Delivery-designated hampers were organized by community location.  
Heavy, perishable, and frozen items were added. The Blackfalds Fire Department delivered the hampers. Delivery process went extremely well; only two hampers required follow-up adjustments, which were resolved the same afternoon.

**December 11 Activities**

Hamper pick-ups occurred at 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.  
Only one hamper remained unclaimed despite multiple contact attempts. Program operations concluded for the year.

The partnership between FCSS and Beyond Community Hub is extraordinary. We handle all the screening, admin and organization of the hamper delivery and pick up, and they organize and coordinate all the volunteers, gift items, gift cards and food items that are given. We enjoy this partnership and know that it makes a difference in so many community members' lives. The Beyond Food Community Hub does the majority of the fundraising for this program and send out the Charitable tax receipts. This is an excellent and important partnership for the community.

**89 Family Hampers** (homes with at least one adult and one child within the home)

**14 Single/Seniors Hampers** (homes with only adults within the home)

**103 Blackfalds Homes** received Christmas Bureau Hampers

**376 total individuals received** – 227 children, 103 women, 46 men  
(26 adults from single/senior homes)

**OUTER DUTIES:**

Assisted a community member with an AGLC/gaming application.

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Coordinated the TOB staff Reindeer games (Foodbank donation challenge) – 441 lbs. of food was donated from TOB staff.

### **ONGOING INITIATIVES:**

**Blackfalds FCSS Facebook Page:** 1628 followers December

**Blackfalds Instagram Page:** 214 followers in December

**Abbey Centre Membership Assistance Program:**

### **YOUTH PROGRAMMER REPORT      December 2025**

#### **YOUTH COOKING CLUB**

- The final Cooking Club session of the year was held on December 10
- Youth participants prepared a chicken and vegetable stir fry celebration dinner for 24 guests, demonstrating the culinary skills developed throughout the program.
- Mayor Savb and her partner, Ray, attended as special guests.
- The event was supported by two community volunteers and a Grade 9 Leader in Training volunteer, contributing to smooth operations.
- The dinner was well received, and youth participants were recognized with certificates of completion and a recipe booklet containing all dishes prepared during the year.
- The recipe booklet is intended to support continued skill development beyond the program.

#### **LEADERS IN TRAINING**

- Leaders in Training program has had a strong start.
- Three Grade 9 students from Iron Ridge Secondary Campus are participating.
- Two students from Lacombe Composite High School (one in Grade 12 and one in Grade 10) have also joined.
- One grade 10 participant is completing the program for work experience and high school credits.

#### **COMMUNITY HELPERS PROGRAM**

Unfortunately, I do not have the capacity to collaborate on this initiative currently, despite recognizing its value to our community. I am hopeful that another community organization will be able to support and move this important work forward.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

Councilor Brown would like more information regarding Community Helpers program for the upcoming meeting.

#### **OUTER DUTIES:**

#### **ONGOING INITIATIVES:**

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**Positive Ticketing Program:** FCSS continues to partner with Constable Hewitt to distribute positive tickets to youth in the community and schools. These tickets recognize and encourage positive or improved behavior, reinforcing a culture of respect and responsibility among local youth.

**Youth Interagency Meetings:** On September 3, we hosted our very first 'Youth Program Providers: Blackfalds Meet-Up' to bring together local organizations that offer youth programming in

our community. This gathering created a valuable space for connection, information sharing, and collaboration, with the shared goal of supporting youth in Blackfalds.

**School Engagement:** Participated in Iron Ridge Intermediate Campus on September 4 to engage youth and their families

MONTHLY FCSS NEWSLETTERS

**Vibrant Living 50+** 261 sends with an open rate of 70%

**Interagency** 139 sends and an open rate of 39%

**Beyond Lunchbox Program** 285 sends and an open rate of 53%

The Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board Meeting ended at 8:42 p.m.

Dena Thomas, Chair

Erin Dahl, Admin Staff