

**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS**  
**Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board**  
Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ryan Brown	Town of Blackfalds Councillor
Cory Twerdoclib	Town of Blackfalds Councillor
Dena Thomas	Public at Large
Jessalyn Parsons	Public at Large
Gloricel Cayago	Public at Large
Heather Johnson	Public at Large
Auralei Agrey	Public at Large

**ATTENDING**

Sawyer Hick	Town of Blackfalds FCSS Manager
Cara Kroetsch	Town of Blackfalds FCSS Volunteer Programmer

**OTHERS ATTENDING**

**REGRETS**

Glenda Brown	Public at Large
Kimberly Burrell	Public at Large

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Thomas welcomed all attending, introduced Councillor Brown and Councillor Twerdoclib and called the Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board Meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Member Johnson moved that the Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board approve the agenda.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**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 June 12th, 2025**

Member Agrey moved that the Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board recommends Council adopt the minutes from June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, as presented.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **Ag Society Information**

Chair Thomas reported meeting with Manager Hick to explore a potential partnership between the Blackfalds Ag Society and Blackfalds FCSS on the “Empowering Minds: The Light House Project”. This initiative focuses on mental health resources aiming to help rural residents in Alberta navigate available support services and equip community First Identifiers to recognize, respond, and support mental wellbeing before issues escalate into crisis.

The Ag Society has applied to participate. If approved after the interview on Dec 18, we will need to build a committee, pick a date for the dinner that allows 6 weeks of advertising. The Society plans to host a community dinner that will include impactful First Identifier Training, while also building community pride and visibility.

The board expressed strong support for this initiative, noting that it aligns well with the priorities identified in the latest social needs assessment.

#### **FCSS Managers Verbal Update**

- Manager Hick reported on the following:
  - Sue, our Admin Assistant, is on medical leave for minimum of 3 months. A temporary replacement has been hired and will begin December 1.
  - A business case has been submitted for a 0.6 FTE Seniors Support Programmer position. This is the second year requesting the position, FCSS has not received a new position in many years.
  - The Volunteer Programmer will conclude facilitation of senior sessions in November, continuing activity tracking until end of the year. Seniors programming has been outside her job description and has impacted her regular duties, as she has managed it informally for the past 5 years. She will remain liaison with the Blackfalds Seniors Club until a new appointee is named.
  - Following the June Board motion, the Housing Needs Assessment was forward to Council. In September, Council decided to have it brought back to February budget deliberations. Estimated cost \$30,000
  - Manager Hick and the Volunteer Programmer participated in the LREMP Live Exercise this week. Mayor Svab and Councillor Twerdoclib attended as observers.

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Roles within ICP and ESS provided valuable insight into how LREMP would function if activated.

- Budget changes for the upcoming year to include
  - \$2500 increase for Volunteer Appreciation Event (catering expenses)
  - \$1000 allocation for Youth Wellness General Contracted Services (to engage external providers for youth programs in the guide)

### **FCSSAA Conference – November 26-28, 2025**

The Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA) hosts an annual provincial conference bringing together staff, board members, and community leaders. It provides networking, training, and keynote sessions focused on strengthening preventive social services and community impact across Alberta. Manager Hick and Chair Thomas are registered to attend the FCSSAA Conference next week.

### **Volunteer Programmer Report**

- On September 8<sup>th</sup> FCSS hosted a free Community Info Expo where residents connected with local organizations, explored services, and signed up for programs. Town Council gathered input on the 2026 budget, while staff shared details on programs, volunteer opportunities, and upcoming events.
- Local businesses are invited to join the Blackfalds Xmas Challenge! Competing in 5 categories (1–2 staff, 3–9 staff, 10–25 staff, 25+ staff, and non-profits), teams aim to collect the most donations by December 2. The top team wins a prize!
- Nine volunteers have committed to supporting the Reception Centre in the event of an emergency, a comprehensive multi-phase training plan was implemented. This initiative is designed to provide both foundational knowledge and hands-on experience, ensuring staff and volunteers can respond confidently and effectively during a crisis.
- Volunteer Programmer's role in senior programming will conclude in November, with activity tracking continuing through year-end. While direct facilitation ends, they will remain as liaison between the Blackfalds Seniors Club and the municipality until a new appointee is named.

#### **Seniors Information Session:**

- **September 5<sup>th</sup> Watercolor Wonders** - watercolor painting sessions aimed at inspiring attendees to tap into their creativity and enjoy the experience of painting. **Attendees: 9**
- **October 7<sup>th</sup> Aging in Place** - The Volunteer Programmer led an informative session focused on "aging in place", offering practical strategies and resources to help older adults maintain independence while continuing to enjoy the comfort of their own homes. Participants were introduced to a range of local supports including transportation services and grocery delivery; Golden Circle spoke about meal delivery options and Lacombe FCSS spoke about home care options  
**Attendees: 20**

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

- Blackfalds Youth Crew 2 September dates (3 volunteers totaling 8 hours)
- Winter Warmth Fall Fundraiser (Oct 2) 8 volunteers, 13 volunteer hours
- Frightful Family Movie Night (Oct 24) 7 volunteers, 18 volunteer hours
- Monster Bash (Oct 25) 13 volunteers, 44.5 volunteer hours
- ESS Reception Volunteers (ongoing) 9 volunteers, 154.5 volunteer hours contributed to date

### **ONGOING INITIATIVES:**

1. **Monthly FCSS Volunteer Newsletter**
  - a. In September, 299 sends with an open rate of 55%
  - b. In October, 299 sends with an open rate of 57%
2. **Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:**
  - a. Jim Hurley Free Skate Monitors – Sunday's Sep-Mar
  - b. Youth Night Out – Nov 14
  - c. Light Up Blackfalds – Nov 21
  - d. Breakfast & Brunch with Santa – Nov 29
  - e. Snow Angel Program – winter months

### **Community Engagement Programmer Report**

- The September Interagency hosted, 28 people attended representing 19 organizations.
- Get Comfy in the Kitchen series (during Culture Month) Shifted from a community kitchen to a cooking class model, which was very well received.
- Digital Danger session was in partnership with Constable Stephaine Bosch of the Northern Alberta Internet Child Exploitation Unit. Excellent content delivered, though attendance was low.
- Community Winter Wear Fundraiser is so successful! It speaks to the generosity of our community and the level of integrity and trust that the community at large has in our ability to ensure that local dollars support local children. Total funds raised was \$22,222 with \$4,075 for next year's Tools for School Program.
- Coats for Kids: In partnership with Mountain Wearhouse, the program provided 135 winter items, including 93 coats, 25 pairs of snowpants, and 17 pairs of boots. Distribution took place over three days with flexible pick-up times, supported by two volunteers who contributed six hours. Families appreciated the new option to choose between coats, snowpants, or boots, which will continue next year. Final program costs are pending invoice.
- Ask a Lawyer session was in partnership with The Community Legal Clinic. 8 community members received 30 minutes of free legal advice.

### **More than a Movie:**

- September guests had a great time catching up after the summer and watching "Sahara". **24 guests attended**
  - 23 from the Town of Blackfalds, 1 from the City of Lacombe

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- October guests enjoyed the fellowship created, as well as the movie "Jumanji – The Next Level". **20 guests attended**
  - 16 from the Town of Blackfalds, 2 from the City of Lacombe, 2 from the County of Lacombe

### **50+ Walking Club:**

- September: average 20 walkers per Tuesday (85% Blackfalds, 15% Lacombe County)
- October: average 19 walkers per Tuesday (70% Blackfalds, 7% are from the City of Lacombe, 23% Lacombe County)

### **Outer duties:**

- Attended Community Expo
- Attended Truth and Reconciliation Walk/ participated in Orange Shirt Day.
- Assisted with student CRA review.
- Attended ESS training Oct 22
- Submitted Winter Guide activities
- Supported community member with Bingo Application (Seniors Club)

### **ONGOING INITIATIVES:**

1. **Blackfalds FCSS Facebook Page:** 1540 followers (Sep), 1578 followers (Oct)
2. **Blackfalds Instagram Page:** 186 followers (Sep), 199 followers (Oct)
3. **Abbey Centre Membership Assistance Program:**
  - a. Processed 2 applications processed in September
  - b. Processed 2 application processed in October

### **Youth Programmer**

- Blackfalds Youth Crew (BYC): In September Youth Programmer teamed up with Blackfalds Culture Days to celebrate community and creativity together!
  - Total youth registered 63 (Sep) 91 (Oct)
- Purchased orange shirts for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- The Expressive Arts experience empowered youth to explore their imagination, have fun, and express themselves creatively in a safe, inclusive space. Participants designed personalized T-shirts that celebrated what inspires them. The class was fully attended, with 12 youth taking part.
- We introduced our Leaders in Training (LiT) program for youth in grades 9–12! This opportunity allows volunteers to work alongside me in supporting BYC programs and our popular Cooking Club. Students in grades 10–12 can also earn work experience credits by completing 75+ volunteer hours.
- Child Safe Canada Internet Safety class was fully attended, with 15 youth taking part and 4 on the waitlist.
- Youth Cooking Club provides information to youth about healthy eating, cooking skills, and kitchen safety. The program was fully attended, with 11 youth taking part.
- Community Helpers Program (CPH): Discussions with Iron Ridge Secondary's social worker highlighted the value of offering the Community Helpers Program as a

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community-based initiative. This Alberta Health Services–funded training supports youth mental health and suicide prevention, aligning with the 2022 Social Assessment goals. Planning is underway to launch the program in Blackfalds for youth ages 14–17 in the New Year.

**Outer duties:**

- Attended ESS training Sep 24 and Oct 22
- Submitted Winter Guide activities

**ONGOING INITIATIVES:**

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **School Engagement:** Participated in Iron Ridge Intermediate Campus on September 4 to engage youth and their families

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

Board members interested in attending the Volunteer Christmas Open House on December 1 are asked to RSVP Volunteer Programmer.

The Blackfalds & District Family & Community Support Services Board Meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.

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Dena Thomas, Chair

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Erin Dahl, Admin Staff