

COMMUNITY MEMBERS MEETING NOTES

Date: March 23, 2026

Time: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Location: [Zoom](#)

Chair: Carla Bullinger (in for Shannon Thom) **Notes:** Bree Odd

In attendance: Carla Bullinger, Bree Odd, Jenn Johnson, Emma Swabey, Hanna Favel, Madison Rushton, Sarah Jackman, Robin Willems, Michael Franklin, Margaret-Anne Enders, Barb Jones

Land Acknowledgement

The Social Planning Council of Williams Lake and Area would like to acknowledge this meeting is taking place on the traditional unceded territory of the Secwepemc Nation and the T'exelcenc people.

Review & Approve Agenda for March 23, 2026

Member Introductions: Share your name and the organization you represent.

Guest Speakers: Jenn Johnson, Regional Coordinator, Community Impact & Investment United Way British Columbia. Jenn presented on Social Response Task Forces.

- Social Sector Activation Guide and Social Response Task Force model introduced to support coordinated emergency response beyond ESS 72-hour window
- Clear gap identified between initial emergency response (food, shelter, clothing) and ongoing supports needed for vulnerable populations
- Focus on strengthening coordination using existing relationships and services
- Recommends identifying a local convener to activate communication and coordination during emergencies
- Light structure suggested (1–2 meetings per year) to maintain contact lists and clarify roles
- Emphasis on building connections before emergencies occur, rather than reacting during events
- Community-based and grassroots approaches are part of the model (e.g., informal supports, checking in on vulnerable individuals)
- Encouraged reflection on:
 - current community capacity to support vulnerable populations
 - existing partnerships vs siloed work
 - opportunities to formalize what is already happening
- United Way can support
 - partner mapping, initial coordination and meeting facilitation
 - tools/templates (contact lists, communication pathways)
 - early-stage setup, with community leading long-term

Discussion

- Strong existing emergency response network already in place (e.g., heat dome, cooling spaces) with partners including Interior Health, Salvation Army, and CRD
- Opportunity to build from existing relationships rather than creating new systems; shift from reactive response to more structured coordination

- Key contacts identified, to be shared for next steps (e.g., ESS and community connections)
- Importance of improving communication pathways and coordination across organizations
- Gap identified in connection with Indigenous communities and emergency response teams

Key Connections

- CRD emergency response contacts (including Stephanie Mason and Dave Dixon)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – Trina Donahue (Executive Director)
- Interior Health and Salvation Army identified as existing emergency response partners
- Opportunity to connect with Indigenous communities & First Nations emergency response teams
- United Way contact shared for follow-up and coordination

SPC Updates

Emma Swabey – Central Cariboo Community Food Hub (CCCFH)

- Soup Series continuing in partnership with Seniors Activity Centre, connecting seniors, businesses, and community members
- Expansion being explored to include youth and newcomers/new residents
- Funding secured for several sessions; additional grant decision pending
- Moving toward clearer strategic direction and planning for next year

Hanna Favel – Revive Thrive (SPC)

- Revive Thrive hosting a table during Seedy Saturday, on March 28 10am-2pm, TRU
 - community questionnaire to gather input and data
 - incentives, grocery gift card draw (\$100, \$50, \$25)
- Please share materials for distribution and community connection
- Role ending at end of month; transition to new facilitator underway

Bree Odd – Social Planning Council (SPC)

- End-of-month priorities: budgets, contracts, and website updates
- Request to partners: submit social media content as **JPEG/PNG (not PDF)** to reduce admin time
- CEP Leadership Table ongoing (connected to Tamarack)
- Acknowledged Hanna's work and transition

Lightning Round - Share an Organizational Update, a Challenge, or a Success

Madison Rushton – Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

- Connect Parenting Program starting April 8, planned for Wednesdays, 5:00–6:30 pm (timing may adjust based on participant needs)
 - Program for parents/caregivers of youth ages 8–18, with focus on attachment, communication, and understanding youth/parent perspectives through role play and reflection
- Foundry partnering to provide food during sessions
- Upcoming mindfulness art-based workshop anticipated to begin mid-May (details coming)
- CMHA increasing use of Facebook (Family Solutions) to share program updates
- Attending WLFN Easter Celebration – March 29, 1:00–4:00 pm at TRU (outdoors)

Robin Willems – Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

- Supporting delivery of Connect Parenting and Family Solutions programming alongside Madison
- No additional updates shared

Margaret-Anne Enders – Awakenings Anti-Racism & Reconciliation / Orange Shirt Society

- Orange Shirt Society book study launching in May:
 - 5-week online pilot on Decolonization and Me by Christy McLeod and Phyllis Webstad
 - working with Cheryl Chapman and Mike Ritaskett as cultural guides
 - limited to 12 participants for the pilot, with likely repeat in September
 - cost is \$150, with sliding scale available if finances are a barrier
- Quilts for Survivors ongoing:
 - quilts available for survivors of residential school, day school, and 60s scoop
 - ceremonies planned for the spring, with private quilt gifting also available if preferred
- Shared the previously mentioned graduation event has been postponed due to timing

Michael Franklin – Child Development Centre / Foundry

- Ongoing increase in youth accessing services, with growing demand for mental health and primary care supports - continues to see increasing complexity of needs among youth
- Work happening in 100 Mile House, with similar service pressures and demand
- Continued focus on integrated supports for youth across communities

Barb Jones – Primary Care / SPC Board

- Restorative Justice workshop coming.
 - Focus on restorative approaches, relationship repair, and alternatives to traditional justice processes, more info to come

Carla Bullinger – Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy (CCPL)

- Shared updates on current CCPL work and ongoing programming
- Continued focus on supporting community members through literacy and learning initiatives
- Emphasized connection and collaboration with other community organizations

Sarah Jackman – Salvation Army (SA)

- Shared current food insecurity data for Williams Lake and beyond:
 - National food bank usage increased 5.2%
 - Williams Lake food bank usage increased 9.22% (nearly double the national rate)
 - Meals served increased 5% compared to 2024
 - Food costs have increased 31.7% since 2019
 - 24% of that increase in the last 4 years
 - 6.2% increase in December alone
 - 1 in 5 Canadians are considered working poor
 - 33% of food bank usage is children
 - 25% of British Columbians are food insecure
- Noted Salvation Army is the only food bank in the area and receives no government funding (federal, provincial, or municipal)
- Raised concern about sustainability and lack of fee-for-service contract access

Discussion

- Statement that approx. 90% of individuals experiencing homelessness are local, not from outside
- Concern raised about approaches that involve sending people away from the community, including impacts on:
 - connection to family
 - connection to home community
- Acknowledgement that additional supports and services are needed locally
- Concern that current approaches may not reflect the realities of people's lived experience
- Reference to broader impacts related to Indigenous communities and connection to land, including historical/colonial context

Bree Odd – (On behalf of Sherry Yonkman – Downtown Williams Lake BIA)**

- The deadline for applying for our Public Art Grant is April 15.
- Registrations for Art Walk open up April 1 and fees remain the same as last year.
- Clean Team is back and working hard.
- If anyone would like me to share something in our newsletter, please send it to me in the next week at info@downtownwilliamslake.com

Possible Connections/Gaps in Services/Alignments

- Existing emergency response network already in place (CRD, Interior Health, Salvation Army, community partners) with opportunity to strengthen coordination
- Identification of key contacts to support emergency coordination, including ESS-related connections (e.g., Dave Dixon) and CMHA leadership (Trina Donahue)
- Opportunity to connect United Way with local partners to support development of a Social Response Task Force
- Gap identified in connection with Indigenous communities and First Nations emergency response
- Alignment between food insecurity data and broader housing/homelessness realities, reinforcing interconnected system pressures
- Shared recognition across organizations of increasing demand for services (food security, mental health, community supports)
- Opportunities for cross-promotion and outreach through upcoming events (e.g., CD Saturday Market, Easter event)
- Revive Thrive engagement activities (e.g., market questionnaire) connected to community input and data collection efforts

Actions / Next Steps

- Bree compile/share contact list (including CRD/ESS connections) to support emergency coordination
- Jenn Johnson (United Way) to follow up with local partners for initial coordination work
- Organizations invited to share materials with Revive Thrive for distribution at Seedy Saturday
- Community input to be collected through Revive Thrive questionnaire at upcoming market

Meeting Adjourned: 12:41