

Date: April 27, 2026

Time: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Location: [Zoom](#)

Chair: Marnie Brenner (in for Shannon Thom)

Notes: Bree Odd

In attendance: Marnie Brenner, Carla Bullinger, Jean Oke, Angelika (Revive Thrive/CCPL), Dana Hamblin, Sarah Jackman, Michael Franklin, Liselle Pierce, Barb Jones, Susan Dahlback, Hannah Diether

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 April 27, 2026

- Agenda approved as amended, adding Revive Thrive, potential TRU changes, and a Community Food Hub update if a representative attended.

Member Introductions: Members shared names and organizations.

- TRU Williams Lake remains open, with a full fall course and program schedule; community registration encouraged.

Guest Speaker: Sarah Jackman, Community Engagement Coordinator, Salvation Army

- Operates the area's only Food Banks Canada-accredited food bank.
- Food hampers increased over 9%; meals served increased 5%; local food bank use rose about twice the national 5.2% increase.
- Presented figures showed grocery costs up nearly 9% year over year and approximately 30% over the past couple of years.
- Children and seniors each represent about one-third of food bank clients; Salvation Army serves over 20,000 breakfasts and lunches annually.
- No regular federal, provincial, or municipal funding; operations rely on fundraising, grants, donations, Food Banks Canada support, and thrift store revenue.
- City denied fee-for-service request because no new organizations were being added to existing funding commitments.
- Christmas Kettle raises about \$70,000 annually; thrift store covers well over half of operating costs.
- Members encouraged to share grant opportunities, build partnerships, and track statistics demonstrating need and impact.

Discussion

- Collective advocacy and community voices may strengthen requests for municipal support.
- Community donations remain strong, but stable funding is not keeping pace with demand and food costs.
- Collaboration, funding information, and clear data identified as key responses.

SPC Updates

Angelika - Revive Thrive / Community Ending Poverty (CEP)

- Revive Thrive beginning a new work year; organizations encouraged to maintain representation at the CEP Leadership Table.
- CEP gathering community input on local post-secondary education amid possible TRU changes.
- Survey and QR-code poster collecting stories and statistics for the TRU Board, City Hall, and longer-term planning.

Community Members Meeting Notes

- Outreach planned through posters, community presentations, newspaper articles, direct conversations, and paper or electronic surveys.
- Members asked to complete and share survey; initial results targeted for first week of June before mid-June TRU Board meeting, with collection continuing through summer.
- Organizational letter and possible template planned to support submissions on local post-secondary education.

Discussion

- Local post-secondary education identified as important to poverty reduction, employers, recruitment, and community well-being.
- Suggested direct outreach to Indigenous communities and survey participation at Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Revive Thrive connecting with City, Cariboo Regional District, and Chamber of Commerce; members also supported direct provincial engagement.
- No Community Food Hub update; no representative attended.

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

Sarah Jackman - Salvation Army

- Volunteer appreciation dinner planned May 9 for about 100 volunteers.
- United Way work-experience grant will support six temporary workers in food bank, thrift store, and kitchen; eligible participants receive income or disability assistance and a stipend not deducted from benefits.

Barb Jones - Primary Care Network / SPC Board

- No additional update shared.

Michael Franklin - Foundry

- Partnering with Salvation Army, Rotary, Kinsmen, Car Club, and others to offer youth low-pressure volunteer and work experience.
- About 18-20 youth have participated, gaining confidence, references, training, and resume experience.
- Upcoming opportunities include Rotary breakfasts, Kinsmen events, Stampede parking, and Car Club activities; some include honoraria.
- Friday barbecues continue around 3:00-3:30 p.m. for youth, families, and service providers.

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

- CCPL and Foundry continuing middle-school drop-in program with secondary-school peer tutors.
- Immigration policy changes creating uncertainty for long-term temporary foreign workers, including fewer permanent-residency pathways and possible return to countries where they no longer have established homes.
- CCPL received 15% funding reduction; current services can continue, but further cuts would reduce capacity.

Liselle Pierce - Gibraltar Mine

- Mining Month includes four on-site crew barbecues raising funds for BC Children's Hospital through minimum \$5 donations.
- Employee donations matched by Gibraltar Mine and parent company; annual total approximately \$17,000-\$22,000.
- Free community barbecue scheduled May 13 at 4:00 p.m., Save-On-Foods.

Community Members Meeting Notes

Dana Hamblin - Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

- CMHA lost two of three counselling funding streams; one ongoing counsellor currently receives about 30 new referrals monthly.
- Ten-month grant will fund an additional counsellor; recruitment planned, with June start hoped for.
- Three staff trained in ASIST; Dana to train in Mental Health First Aid, allowing community training to resume.

Hannah Diether - Central Interior Rural Division of Family Practice

- Williams Lake Primary Care Hub mental health clinicians facing 10-12+ week waits and high referral volume.
- Registered dietitian position vacant during maternity leave, creating service backlog.
- Unattached-patient cancer-screening clinic ended after CanScreen closed April 1; supporting registered nurse moved to a temporary Interior Health role.
- Hub reviewing options; some support remains through Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC).

Angelika - Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy (CCPL)

- Grant received to pilot multicultural festival Saturday, July 11, at Boitano Park; rain location secured.
- Planning committee seeking more participants, including clients and community members with varied cultural experiences.
- Plans include cultural tables, food samples prepared in an industrial kitchen, music, performances, and a Williams Lake First Nation welcome.

Jean Oke - Scout Island Nature Centre

- Cariboo Gold fundraiser scheduled May 9 at curling rink, with dance, silent auction, refreshments, and Curling Club bar; tickets at The Open Book.
- Marsh Magic scheduled May 31; organizations may contact Scout Island manager about information tables.
- Bridge construction expected in June; summer staff hired; outdoor volunteer opportunities available.

Marnie Brenner - Interior Health

- Summer heat preparedness includes personal heat plans, cooling locations, neighbour check-ins, wildfire smoke, masks in hot weather, and risks for seniors.
- Available to provide community presentations on heat safety and staying cool.

Possible Connections/Gaps in Services/Alignments

- Food security, mental health, primary care, and community organizations facing rising demand, unstable funding, and staffing shortages.
- Counselling shortages contributing to lengthy waits at CMHA and Primary Care Hub.
- Salvation Army, Foundry, CCPL, Scout Island, and partners offer practical volunteer and work-experience pathways.
- Post-secondary education, newcomer stability, employment, mental health, and food security recognized as interconnected poverty factors.
- Loss of unattached-patient cancer screening and vacant dietitian role create preventive and primary-care gaps.
- Heat and wildfire-smoke preparedness requires coordinated outreach, especially for seniors and vulnerable residents.

Community Members Meeting Notes

Actions / Next Steps

- Members to share relevant grants and funding opportunities, even when not suited to their own organizations.
- Members to complete and circulate post-secondary survey and consider an organizational letter when template is available.
- Angelika to continue outreach, explore Indigenous engagement and event tabling, and compile initial results by first week of June.
- Dana and Hannah to connect about counselling demand, wait times, and coordination.
- Community partners to consider referrals to Salvation Army work experience, Foundry youth opportunities, and Scout Island volunteering.
- Organizations may contact Marnie for heat-safety information or presentations.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:27 p.m. Motion to adjourn by Michael Franklin.