



**TOWN OF CLARESHOLM  
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2023  
AGENDA**

Time: 7:00 P.M.  
Place: Council Chambers  
Town of Claresholm Multi-Use Community Building, 111 – 55 Avenue West  
Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe3OPyLhTzPajvPVAtNL1KA/live>

**NOTICE OF RECORDING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**OFFICIAL OATHS – Cody Olson, Barrister and Solicitor**

**CODE OF CONDUCT OATH**

**AGENDA: ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MINUTES: REGULAR MEETING – SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

**PUBLIC HEARING: BYLAW #1757 – Land Use Bylaw Amendment**

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. **BYLAW #1757 – Land Use Bylaw Amendment**  
**RE: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Readings**
2. **CORRES: Claresholm Haunted House**  
**RE: Request for Donation**
3. **CORRES: Claresholm Local Press**  
**RE: Old Fashioned Christmas**
4. **REQUEST FOR DECISION: Strategic Planning**
5. **REQUEST FOR DECISION: Letter of Support - Fire Training Grant**
6. **REQUEST FOR DECISION: Letter of Support – Regional Housing Supply**
7. **INFORMATION BRIEF: By-Election Result**
8. **INFORMATION BRIEF: Fire Department Open House**
9. **INFORMATION BRIEF: RMA Report on FCSS Programs**
10. **INFORMATION BRIEF: CAO Report**
11. **INFORMATION BRIEF: Council Resolution Status**
12. **ADOPTION OF INFORMATION ITEMS**
13. **IN CAMERA**
  - a. **Intergovernmental Relations – FOIP Section 21**

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

1. Claresholm Public Library Board Meeting Minutes – June 20, 2023
2. Age-Friendly E-News – September 12, 2023

**ADJOURNMENT**



# Claresholm

## OFFICIAL OATH

I, **Brad Schlossberger**, swear that I will diligently, faithfully and to the best of my ability, execute according to law, the office of **Mayor** for the Town of Claresholm.

So help me God.

SWORN before me at the **Town of Claresholm** in the Province of **Alberta**,  
this **25<sup>th</sup>** day of **September 2023** A.D.

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**Brad Schlossberger**

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*A Justice of Peace, Notary Public or  
Commissioner of Oaths.*



# Claresholm

## OFFICIAL OATH

I, **Diana Ross**, swear that I will diligently, faithfully and to the best of my ability, execute according to law, the office of **Councillor** for the Town of Claresholm.

So help me God.

SWORN before me at the **Town of Claresholm** in the Province of **Alberta**, this **25<sup>th</sup>** day of **September 2023** A.D.

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**Diana Ross**

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*A Justice of Peace, Notary Public or  
Commissioner of Oaths.*

**SCHEDULE “A”**

**TOWN OF CLARESHOLM  
CODE OF CONDUCT OATH**

I recognize that I have primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met so that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of Council. In recognition of my commitment and dedication to the public that has entrusted me, as a member of the Town of Claresholm Council, to provide governance, I \_\_\_\_\_, promise that I will:

- 1) Abide and adhere to the principles that form the Code of Conduct.
- 2) Govern my conduct in accordance with the requirements and obligations as set out in the *Municipal Government Act* or any other *Act* of the Government of Canada, or the Province of Alberta, as well as the requirements set by any Council policy, bylaw, process or rule of order established by Council.
- 3) Demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity and honesty in all public activities in order to inspire the public confidence and trust in me and the municipality I represent.
- 4) Devote time, thought and attention to the duties of a Councillor so I may render effective and knowledgeable service.
- 5) Consider all available information in making decisions and, thereafter, abide by and uphold the decision of Council.
- 6) Treat my fellow Councillors, Administration and the public with respect, concern, courtesy and responsiveness.
- 7) Work with my fellow Councillors in a spirit of harmony, compassion and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion; and listen to and respect those opinions which may be different than my own.
- 8) Strive for open and honest communication with my fellow Councillors, Administration and the public.
- 9) Ensure that my comments accurately reflect the official position and will of Council as a whole, even if I personally disagree with Council’s position.
- 10) Remember that, unless otherwise authorized by Council, I have no individual legal authority outside of a meeting of Council and I must conduct my relationships with staff, the public and the media on this basis.
- 11) Not involve myself in matters of Administration, which fall within the jurisdiction of the CAO.
- 12) Not use my position to benefit me or any other individual, organization, or group, apart from the total interest of the community; and avoid placing myself in a position where there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest.
- 13) Not use Town funds, property or information for my personal benefit or gain or for the personal gain or benefit of any other individual, organization, or group.
- 14) Protect the privileged information to which I have access in the course of my official duties; and maintain the confidentiality of information that is not otherwise available to the public.
- 15) Neither neglect my personal obligation to the public and my legal obligation to the Province of Alberta, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, organization, or group.
- 16) Commit to disclosing to the appropriate authorities and/or to Council, any behaviour or activity that I become aware of that may qualify as a violation of the law or the Council Code of Conduct bylaw.

Dated at the Town of Claresholm, in the Province of Alberta, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Mayor or Council Member



**Claresholm**

**TOWN OF CLARESHOLM  
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

**Place: Council Chambers  
Town of Claresholm Multi-Use Community Building, 111 – 55 Avenue West  
Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe3OPyLhTzPajvPVAtNL1KA/live>**

**COUNCIL PRESENT:** Deputy Mayor Kieth Carlson, Councillors: Mike Cutler, Rod Kettles and Kandice Meister

**ABSENT:** Councillor Craig Zimmer

**STAFF PRESENT:** Chief Administrative Officer: Abe Tinney, Finance Assistant: Karine Keys

**MEDIA PRESENT:** None

**NOTICE OF RECORDING:** Deputy Mayor Carlson provided notice that live streaming and recording of the Council meeting would begin immediately at 7:00 p.m. and that recording would continue until such time as the meeting goes In Camera and/or is adjourned.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Carlson.

**AGENDA:** Moved by Councillor Meister that the Agenda be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**MINUTES:** **REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 14, 2023**

Moved by Councillor Cutler that the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2023 be accepted as presented.

**CARRIED**

**DELEGATION:** **CLARESHOLM RCMP DETACHMENT – Cpl. Thomas Nairn**  
**RE: Community Policing Report – April 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Cpl. Thomas Nairn was present to deliver the Claresholm RCMP Detachment's quarterly Community Policing Report from April 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. **BYLAW #1746 – Road Closure Bylaw**  
**RE: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Readings**

Moved by Councillor Kettles to give Bylaw #1746, a Road Closure Bylaw, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading.

**CARRIED**

Moved by Councillor Cutler to give Bylaw #1746, a Road Closure Bylaw, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Final Reading.

**CARRIED**

2. **CORRES: Hon. Tanya Fir, Minister of Arts, Culture & Status of Women**  
**RE: CFEP Grant Application – Amundsen Park**

Received for information.

3. **CORRES: Hon. Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs**  
**RE: 2024 Fire Services Training Program Grant**

Received for information.

4. **CORRES: Alberta Municipal Affairs**  
**RE: Meeting Request Declined for Convention**

Received for information.

5. **CORRES: Inclusion Foothills**  
**RE: October is Disability Employment Awareness Month**

Received for information.

6. **CORRES: Terry Fox Run Claresholm**  
**RE: Request for Town Representative**

Received for information.

7. **REQUEST FOR DECISION: ATCO Gas Franchise Fee**

**MOTION #23-133** Moved by Councillor Kettles to approve a rate change in the ATCO Gas Franchise Fee from 10% to 12% for 2024.

**CARRIED**

8. **REQUEST FOR DECISION: Committee Vacancies**

**MOTION #23-134** Moved by Councillor Cutler to appoint Councillor Meister as the Town of Claresholm's representative to the Regional Landfill Commission until September 25, 2023 when a permanent appointee can be chosen.

**CARRIED**

**9. REQUEST FOR DECISION: 2023 Alberta Municipalities Convention**

MOTION #23-135 Moved by Councillor Meister to approve the out-of-budget expenditure of increasing the costs for convention expenses from \$8,000 to \$14,000 for the 2023 year to facilitate a harmonious transition to a new Council.

**CARRIED**

**10. FINANCIAL REPORT: Statement of Operations July 31, 2023**

Moved by Councillor Kettles to accept the Consolidated Statement of Operations for the month ended July 31, 2023 as presented.

**CARRIED**

**11. INFORMATION BRIEF: Council Committee Report**

Received for information.

**12. INFORMATION BRIEF: Council Resolution Status**

Received for information.

**13. ADOPTION OF INFORMATION ITEMS**

Moved by Councillor Cutler to adopt the information items as presented.

**CARRIED**

**14. IN CAMERA:**

- a. Personnel – FOIP Section 17
- b. Personnel – FOIP Section 17
- c. Advice from Officials – FOIP Section 24

Moved by Councillor Meister to go In Camera at 7:29 p.m. for the following items:

- a. Personnel – FOIP Section 17
- b. Personnel – FOIP Section 17
- c. Advice from Officials – FOIP Section 24

**CARRIED**

**NOTICE OF RECORDING CEASED:** Deputy Mayor Carlson stated that the live stream has ended at 7:29 p.m.

Moved by Councillor Mesiter to come out of In Camera at 8:05 p.m.

**CARRIED**

**NOTICE OF RECORDING:** Deputy Mayor Carlson provided notice that live streaming and recording of the Council meeting would begin again at 8:05 p.m.

- a. Personnel – FOIP Section 16

MOTION #23-136 Moved by Councillor Cutler to accept the personnel issue as presented in closed session.

**CARRIED**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Councillor Kettles that the meeting adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

**CARRIED**

**NOTICE OF RECORDING CEASED:** Deputy Mayor Carlson noted that recording ceased at 8:05 p.m.

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Deputy Mayor – Kieth Carlson

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Chief Administrative Officer – Abe Tinney

# PUBLIC HEARING

# NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

## TOWN OF CLARESHOLM IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

### PROPOSED BYLAW NO. 1757

7:00 p.m., Monday, September 25, 2023  
Town of Claresholm Council Chambers, 111 - 55 Avenue West

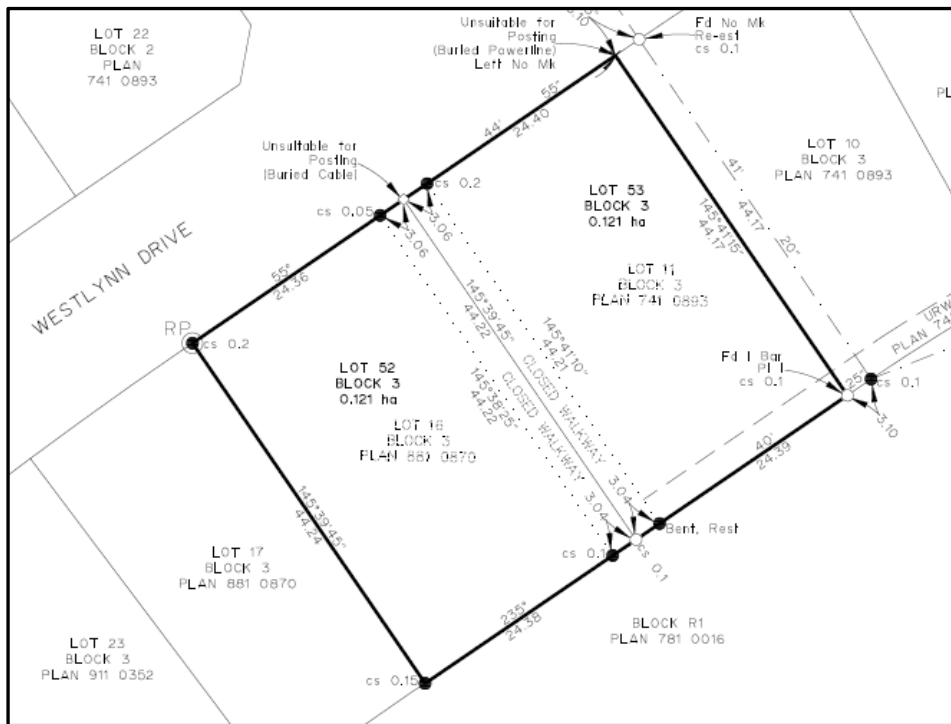
PURSUANT to sections 216.4, 606 and 692 of the Municipal Government Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter M-26, as amended, the Council of the Town of Claresholm in the Province of Alberta has given first reading to Bylaw No.1738, which on final passage would amend the Town of Claresholm Land Use Bylaw No.1525.

**THE PURPOSE of proposed Bylaw No. 1757 is to re-designate a portion of land described as:**

**CLOSED WALKWAY, FIRSTLY THAT PART OF PLAN 7410893, BLOCK 3, WALKWAY, THAT FALLS WITHIN PLAN \_\_\_\_\_, BLOCK 3, LOT 52, CONTAINING 0.013 HECTARES (0.03 ACRES) MORE OR LESS, EXCEPTING THEREOUT ALL MINES AND MINERALS**

**SECONDLY, THAT PART OF PLAN 7410893, BLOCK 3, WALKWAY, THAT FALLS WITHIN PLAN \_\_\_\_\_, BLOCK 3 LOT 53, CONTAINING 0.013 HECTARES (0.03 ACRES) MORE OR LESS, EXCEPTING THEREOUT ALL MINES AND MINERALS**

**BE AMENDED BY CHANGING FROM NO DESIGNATION TO "SINGLE DETACHED RESIDENTIAL – R1".**



**THEREFORE, TAKE NOTICE THAT** a public hearing to consider proposed Bylaw No. 1757 will be held in the Town of Claresholm Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, September 25, 2023.

**AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE THAT** anyone wishing to make a presentation regarding the proposed bylaw should contact the Town Planner/Development Officer no later than 2:00 p.m. on September 21, 2023. Both written and/or verbal presentations may be given at the public hearing. A copy of the proposed bylaw may be emailed please inquire at the Town office during normal business hours.

**DATED** at the Town of Claresholm in the Province of Alberta this 13 day of September, 2023.

*Abe Tinney*  
Chief Administrative Officer

# ACTION ITEMS



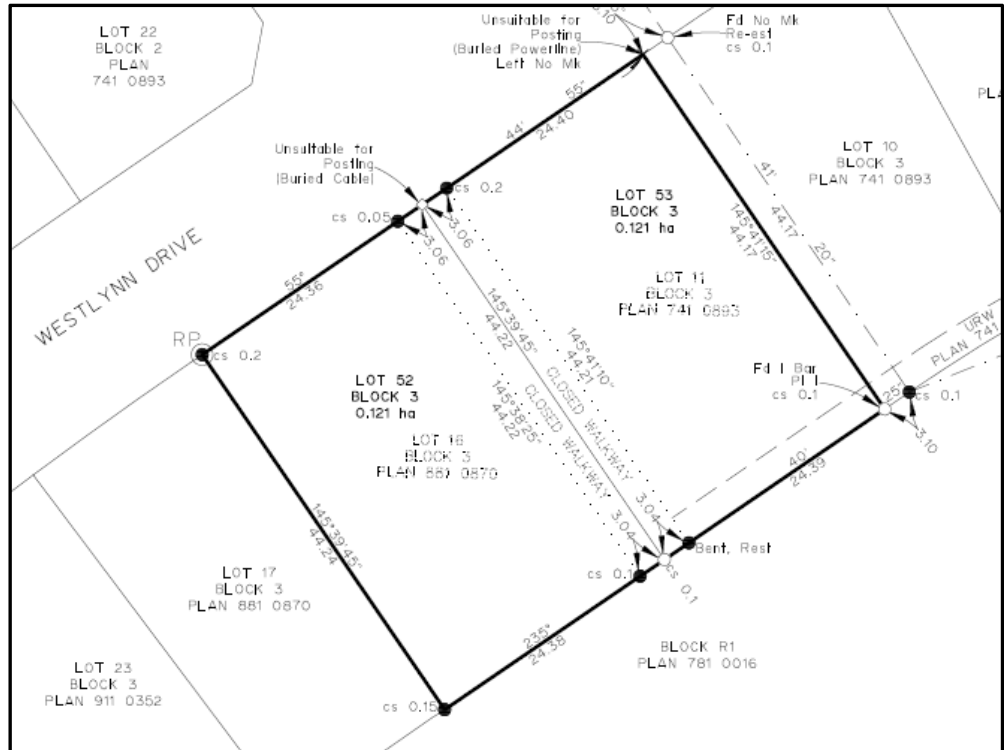
# REQUEST FOR DECISION

Meeting: September 25, 2023  
Agenda Item: 1

## BYLAW No. 1757 - LAND USE BYLAW No.1525 AMENDMENT

At the January 23, 2023 regular meeting, Town Council gave first reading to Bylaw No. 1757, a land use Bylaw amendment. This is a bylaw for the closed roadway adjacent to the golf course. This bylaw allows for the land that currently has no zoning (no land use district), to be zoned residential (R1).

In accordance with the Municipal Government Act (MGA) Section 692, a public hearing is required prior to giving second reading and notice must be given in accordance with MGA Section 606. The notice of public hearing was circulated in the Local Press Town News September 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and mailed to a wide neighborhood circulation. No comments were received from the neighborhood circulation.



### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Council pass a resolution to give Bylaw No. 1757, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings for the districting of the closed roadway after the Public Hearing.

### **PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS:**

Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ to give Bylaw No. 1757, a Land Use Bylaw Amendment, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ to give Bylaw No. 1757, a Land Use Bylaw Amendment, 3<sup>rd</sup> and final reading.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1.) Bylaw No.1757

### **APPLICABLE LEGISLATION:**

- 1.) Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, Chapter M-26, Section 692 – Planning Bylaws.
- 2.) Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, Chapter M-26, Section 606 – Requirements for Advertising.
- 3.) Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, Chapter M-26, Section 230 – Public Hearings.

PREPARED BY: Tara VanDellen, Development Services Manager

APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney, CAO

DATE: September 21, 2023



**TOWN OF CLARESHOLM  
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA  
BYLAW # 1757**

**A Bylaw of the Town of Claresholm to amend Bylaw #1525 being a bylaw setting out land uses for the Town of Claresholm.**

**WHEREAS** pursuant to the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter M-26, as amended, Council of the Town of Claresholm (hereafter called Council) has adopted Land Use Bylaw #1525;

**WHEREAS** it is deemed expedient and proper pursuant to the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act* that the Council of the Town of Claresholm shall issue a Bylaw to amend its existing Land Use Bylaw; and

**WHEREAS** the purpose of the amendment is to accommodate the change of use for closed roads from “No zoning” to “Single Detached Residential – R1”.

**NOW THEREFORE** under the authority and subject to the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*, Council duly assembled does hereby enact the following:

1. The Town of Claresholm Land Use Bylaw #1525 shall be amended as follows:

**LAND USE DISTRICT MAP**

**CLOSED WALKWAY**

**FIRSTLY**

**THAT PART OF**

**PLAN 7410893**

**BLOCK 3**

**WALKWAY**

**THAT FALLS WITHIN**

**PLAN \_\_\_\_\_**

**BLOCK 3**

**LOT 52**

**CONTAINING 0.013 HECTARES (0.03 ACRES) MORE OR LESS**

**EXCEPTING THEREOUT ALL MINES AND MINERALS**

**SECONDLY**

**THAT PART OF**

**PLAN 7410893**

**BLOCK 3**

**WALKWAY**

**THAT FALLS WITHIN**

**PLAN \_\_\_\_\_**

**BLOCK 3  
LOT 53  
CONTAINING 0.013 HECTARES (0.03 ACRES) MORE OR LESS  
EXCEPTING THEREOUT ALL MINES AND MINERALS**

**BE AMENDED BY CHANGING FROM NO DESIGNATION TO “SINGLE DETACHED RESIDENTIAL – R1”.**

#

2. This Bylaw shall take effect on the date of final passage.
3. That Bylaw #1757 be consolidated with Bylaw #1525.
4. Bylaw #1525 is hereby amended.

Read a first time in Council this **23<sup>rd</sup>** day of **January** 2023 A.D.

Read a second time in Council this      day of      2023 A.D.

Read a third time in Council and finally passed in Council this      day of      2023 A.D.

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, Mayor

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Abe Tinney, Chief Administrative Officer



September 21<sup>st</sup> , 2023

Attn: Town of Claresholm Mayor & Councillors

It's getting to that time of year again, Sooo freaking excited! We have started planning the layout, crafting and getting new props for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Claresholm Haunted House.

Because it is such a big undertaking to set up a large haunting, and the fact that all our people are working volunteers we need the equivalent of a full day to get it up and running. That being said we sent in the request for the Lodge room for October 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>.

Friday October 27<sup>th</sup> would be from 5pm to ? then we would finish in the morning of 28<sup>th</sup> with opening the haunting at 5pm. Sunday would start earlier to open we are thinking at 1pm.

Our goal is to fundraise for the skatepark as this was very successful last year, the community is always very gracious in raising money for the chosen group for the year.

Our request to the Town of Claresholm would be to ask for funds to pay or at least help pay for the use of the Lodge Room at the community center. As we are a non profit volunteer group any help would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tracy Elke & all the volunteer crafters, setter uppers and scarers!

**Town of Claresholm Application for Donation**  
(Policy 5.1.01 – Schedule "A")



Date of Application: Sept 21, 2023

Date of Event: Oct 28-29

**1. Applicant Information**

Name of Applicant: Tracy Elko - Claresholm Haunt House

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: Tracy Elko

Phone, Fax, Email: yarddollarstorewithmore@outlook.com

**2. Type of Organization:** (circle)    ARTS/CULTURE    RECREATION/SPORTS    EVENT    OTHER(specify)

**3. Is the Organization registered with Revenue Canada as a Charity?** (circle)    YES    NO

If yes provide registration date & # \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Is the Organization incorporated as a non-profit organization?** (circle)    YES    NO

If yes provide registration date & # \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Type of Donation:** (check and explain)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY EVENT        | <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL EVENT  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING         | <input type="checkbox"/> DONATION - Financial Assistance                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION - Fee Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION - Service, Equipment or Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain):                  |   |

Explanation:

Use of the small hall for our community haunted house. It is a free family event.

Amount (value) Requested: \$440.00

**6. Details of how the funds will be expended:**

2 days rental on hall

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Is a copy of the organization's operational or project budget attached?**

YES

NO

**7. Previous Donations**

Has your organization received donation from the Town of Claresholm in the past? If so, please explain the amount and use of these donations.

Date	Amount	Use of Funds
Oct 2022	440.00	hall rental

**8. Organizational Information**

What services or activities does your organization provide to the Town of Claresholm residents? (Please attach a list of membership/executive)

We put on a free haunted house for the  
community,

Describe in broad terms the principal objective of your organization or initiative:

To give the residents of Claresholm and  
surrounding communities a chance to  
come out as a family and enjoy a haunted  
house

How will your organization acknowledge the Town's donation?

The town will be recognized in all of the  
advertising and on posters.

**10. Please provide a detailed list of all sources of funding for the organization.**

Funding Source	Amount	Recommended Use of Funds
All strictly donations from the community.		



Box 520, 4913 - 2 ST. W., Claresholm, AB T0L 0T0  
Phone: 403-625-4474 • Fax: 403-625-2828  
amanda@claresholmlocalpress.ca  
www.claresholmlocalpress.ca

September 19, 2023

Mayor & Council  
Town of Claresholm

RE: Old Fashioned Christmas

I am writing to let you know that the Chamber, and Local Press are working together to plan our annual Old Fashioned Christmas local shopping event as a kick-off to the Christmas season to be held Friday, December 1, 2023.

Activities will be much the same as they have been in the past:

- Late Night Shopping (until 9 p.m.)
- Christmas Carollers around the Christmas tree in the parking lot.
- Official lighting of the Christmas tree by our Citizens of the Year, plus I would like to invite our Council to be a part of this.
- Horse drawn wagon rides starting from the downtown parking lot
- Bonfire in downtown parking lot - attended by Claresholm Fire Dept.
- Museum board and staff; Welcoming Claresholm committee and other community groups have been invited to participate as well.
- We will have the ATCO Gas stage this year with performances through the evening.

We would like to have permission to close off the the parking lot for the day and evening to accommodate the event.

I will make arrangements with Jace McLean and the town crew for the set up of barricades, the lights on the tree and the fire pit once I receive your approval.

If you have any questions or concerns - please contact me.

Thank you!  
Sincerely,

Amanda Zimmer,  
403-625-4474  
clpprint@shaw.ca



# REQUEST FOR DECISION

Meeting: September 25, 2023

Agenda Item: 4

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## STRATEGIC PLANNING

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### DESCRIPTION:

Now that we once again have a full Council, Administration is recommending that Council hold a Strategic Planning session in order to gain some perspective and direction for Council going forward with a new Mayor and new Councillor. This session will help to define Council's direction for the next two years up until the next municipal election on Monday, October 20, 2025.

Administration is proposing Saturday, October 14, 2023 at the Town Office from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### PROPOSED MOTION:

Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ to hold a Town Council Strategic Planning Session in Council Chambers at the Town Office on Saturday, October 14, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm.

PREPARED BY: Karine Keys, Finance Assistant

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APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney, CAO

DATE: September 22, 2023

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# REQUEST FOR DECISION

Meeting: September 25, 2023  
Agenda Item: 5

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## LETTER OF SUPPORT – M.D. WILLOW CREEK – FIRE SERVICES TRAINING GRANT

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The Municipal District of Willow Creek is applying for the 2024 Alberta Fire Services Training Program Grant on behalf of all fire departments within the M.D of Willow Creek. This grant will assist in offsetting the cost of NFPA fire training programs provided to members of our department.

They are not asking for any monetary commitment from the Town of Claresholm, only a letter of support at this time.

### **PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS:**

Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ to write a letter of support towards the Municipal District of Willow Creek in their application for the 2024 Fire Services Training Program Grant.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Email from the Director of Emergency Services MD of Willow Creek & Ranchland
- Minister Signed letter to Chief Elected Officials

PREPARED BY: Craig White – Fire Chief

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APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney, CAO

DATE: September 22, 2023

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**From:** [Kelly Starling](#)  
**To:** [Fire Chief](#); [12stavellyfire@gmail.com](mailto:12stavellyfire@gmail.com); [Craig White](#); [Granum Fire](#); [Fire Chief](#)  
**Subject:** Fire Service Training Program Grant  
**Date:** September 21, 2023 07:36:18  
**Attachments:** [Minister signed letter to Chief Elected Officials.pdf](#)

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning Chiefs,

Just a follow-up to a previous email regarding the Fire Service Training Program Grant. The M.D of Willow Creek is in the final stages and ready to submit the application. We are applying for the full allotted amount to help offset the cost of our NFPA 1001 Level 1, NFPA 1021 Level 1, and the NFPA 1002 course.

We are on a tight timeline as this grant needs to be submitted by 30-sept-23. That being said; would it be possible for your Departments/Communities to write a letter of support for this initiative?

Thanks all

*Kelly Starling  
Director of Emergency Services  
MD of Willow Creek/MD of Ranchland  
Cell: 1-403-625-1185  
Office: 1-403-625-3351 ext 225*

This communication is intended for the use of the recipient to which it is addressed, and may contain confidential, personal, and or privileged information. Please contact me immediately if you are not the intended recipient of this communication. Do not copy, distribute, or take action relying on it. Any communication received in error, or subsequent reply, should be deleted or destroyed.



ALBERTA  
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

*Office of the Minister  
MLA, Calgary-Hays*

AR111878

August 9, 2023

**Subject: 2024 Fire Services Training Program Grant**

Dear Chief Elected Officials:

It is my pleasure to announce that Municipal Affairs is providing \$500,000 in grant funding for the 2024 Fire Services Training Program. Public safety is always a priority and, while we respect that fire services is a municipal responsibility, the Government of Alberta recognizes that a strong provincial-municipal partnership is key to keeping Albertans safe.

This grant provides supplemental funding supports to assist Alberta communities in ensuring their local fire services are adequately trained to respond to identified community risks. Courses that may be approved for delivery under this grant will align with key outcomes below:

- public safety is preserved in Alberta;
- community risks are being effectively managed by local authorities; and
- firefighters are able to receive training in alignment with best practices.

The grant guidelines and application form are available at [www.alberta.ca/fire-services-training-grant.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/fire-services-training-grant.aspx). Please forward this information to your chief administrative officers and fire chiefs, so they may complete the application form. Collaboration involving multiple municipalities is permitted, but not required.

If you have any questions regarding the grant applications or the program guidelines, please contact Municipal Affairs at 1-866-421-6929 or [firecomm@gov.ab.ca](mailto:firecomm@gov.ab.ca).

This government recognizes the important work of fire services. This grant program will provide fire departments across the province with knowledge and skills to protect their communities.

Sincerely,

Ric McIver  
Minister



# Claresholm

Where **Community** Takes Root

September 21, 2023

Municipal District of Willow Creek  
273129 SEC HWY 520  
Claresholm Industrial Area  
Box 550, Claresholm, AB T0L 0T0

The Council of the Town of Claresholm supports the Municipal District of Willow Creek's application to the **2024 Fire Service Training Program Grant**.

This grant will allow for the continued training of our firefighters who perform an invaluable service not only to our local community, but to the whole municipality.

The Town of Claresholm thanks the M.D. of Willow Creek for their application to this training grant as it shows their dedication to training and education to the volunteer members of our community.

We look forward to hearing of your success in the pursuit of this grant application.

Sincerely, on Behalf of Council,





# REQUEST FOR DECISION

Meeting: September 25, 2023  
Agenda Item: 6

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## ABSW Letter of Support – Regional Housing Supply Initiative

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### **PURPOSE:**

Administration is seeking a letter of support for provincial grant funding for a regional housing initiative.

### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION:**

MOVED by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that the Town of Claresholm provide a letter of support for the &Villages and Alberta SW Regional Housing Project and Grant Proposal.

### **DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:**

Alberta SW and &Villages are proposing a regional housing project whereby 8 to 12 communities collaborate to construct affordable or entry-level housing in each community. If successful, each community will receive 12 modular, 2-bedroom units of 1,000 sq.ft, and &Villages will act as project manager and consultant.

### **DISCUSSION and COSTS:**

There is no direct cost to the municipality to provide the letter of support. However, participating municipalities will be required to provide 1cre of serviced land. The Town currently has non-serviced residential land (Pine Place), so there will be servicing costs associated with this project if it proceeds. Administration estimates approximately \$650,000 to service the land, some of which (perhaps all) could be recovered once the homes sell – we would need to iron out this detail with &Villages.

Committing to the letter of support does not commit the town to allocating Pine Place to this project. It could be possible to acquire other land in Town for this project.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Council approve the letter of support as presented (or as amended by council).

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1.) ANDVILLAGES Regional Roof Raising Proposal
- 2.) Sample Support Letter

PREPARED BY: Abe Tinney – CAO

DATE: September 22, 2023

---

### Our Vision & Richly Imagined Future

GOA supports AND Villages as the trusted representative & development manager for a collaboration of invested municipalities to meet their collective building needs and goals, bringing much-needed housing and prosperity to the region.

### About AND Villages

We have over 55 years of combined development, investment, and management experience plus the resources and professional networks required for successful villages.

**AND reminds us that it is not always 'either-or'. Sometimes it is 'and-and'. We actively and attentively seek 'and-and' opportunities and solutions.**

Villages are places we want to be in and build, supporting interests and passions of villagers by co-creating spaces to live & work & play & shop.

### Partnership Goals

**Support** municipal housing supply needs with funding and Regional Roof Raising program approval.

**Obtain** P3 efficiencies in design, cost, labour and supply across the region by building missing middle residential units in at least four municipalities.

**Provide** fundamentals of success for repeatable and scalable projects across Alberta municipalities and REDAs.

### Why do we Need a Housing Supply Solution?

Canada is facing a housing crisis and the biggest issue is supply. There is a growing need for a broader range of housing types and price-points, including affordable housing and entry-level market housing, in smaller municipalities across Alberta.

### The Challenges

Smaller municipalities are considered tertiary markets by investors and builders. As a result, there is a significantly reduced interest for private investment. In addition, it is expensive for contractors to mobilize for smaller, one-off projects. Tertiary markets also face delays in the supply chain process, raw materials, and shortages in skilled labour are common. Smaller municipalities do not have financial capacity or know-how to add housing to their roles.

### Proposed Project: Collaborate. Coordinate. Construct.

In **collaboration** with Municipalities and Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs), AND Villages proposes to add capacity as (1) consultant and (2) project manager to coordinate several housing projects to meet the identified needs across 8 to 12 municipalities in a single project. The intended outcome is a project of considerable size and investment opportunity within the region that addresses the common challenges rural municipalities face.

**Coordination** includes: establishing Government of Alberta (GOA) grant estimated at \$10.2M per REDA, delivery to participating municipalities, REDAs' role within the Proposed Project is to retain AND Villages as consultant to create program framework and deliverables, and contract AND Villages as project manager, to receive and administer grant funds on behalf of participating municipalities, and municipal roles to ensure site readiness, vend in land, retain project ownership, and contribute grant funds toward their project's cash requirement.

In preparation for project **construction**, AND Villages will secure development approvals, coordinate project management across municipalities, procure RFPs for urban engineering, site design, and construction elements as required. AND Villages will also oversee construction as representative on behalf of the municipality, and facilitate sale of units to local residents

A general contractor will provide site pre-construction services, modular building design support, logistics, construct the surface parking, foundations, and erect the modules.

As swift construction timing is key to addressing lagging supply issues, modular building construction is expected to be utilized to meet labour and supply issues, and to deliver fully-serviced modules for housing supply in each participating municipality across the region.

### Expected Municipal & Provincial Results



Increased population



Increased housing choice & market movement



More new missing middle residential units



ROI and SROI for ratepayers



Investment Readiness

### Next Steps

- 2023 Q4 - Reconvene invested municipalities within the region; gather information
- 2024 Q1 - Create program framework and partnership; assess housing supply & reporting benchmarks in each municipality
- 2024 Q2 - AND Villages & municipalities collaborate on logistics, path to development & buildings; initial funding released
- 2024 Q3 - Submit for building and development approvals, prepare site and construct projects
- 2025 Q2 - Celebrate occupancies of new units across the region



# Alberta Rural Housing Project & Grant Proposal

## Regional Solution for Housing Supply

### Program Framework, Development & Deliverables

AND Villages as consultant will develop the work program and refine the deliverables based on the framework:

1. **Program name:** Regional Roof Raising Collab
  - as a rural initiative, hearkening to a time of community barn-raising, we now look to a collaboration of rural municipalities participating in their successful growth with a regional approach to housing and “roof raising”
2. **Municipal investor-readiness:**
  - readiness assessment e.g., includes available, serviced municipal land site, land use for missing middle housing
  - timeline criteria for readiness e.g., to accommodate municipalities that need to update land use or servicing
3. **Municipal and regional (REDA) growth analysis and basis of comparison:**
  - e.g., use CMHC HAF model for 10% growth targets, assess minimum units estimate for growth benchmark
  - compile market assessment and demographics
  - quantify need and opportunity for housing choice
4. **Further define the problems to solve and measure:**
  - lack of choice in housing and lack of growth in municipalities and region
  - tertiary market status, labour, supply and timing issues
  - municipal capacity and know-how on building housing
5. **Program timeline:**
  - projected start and end for regional housing initiative
  - projected start and end of grant funding
  - create an exit plan for all partners, participants, funders
6. **Program investment** apportioned (see below):
  - Phase 1 program framework creation for GOA
  - Phase 2 grant cash flow to Municipalities and REDA
  - Phase 2 fulfill capacity needs for REDA’s grant reporting
  - Phase 2 final report based on benchmarks and program
7. **Reporting:**
  - track progress of builds
  - track funding and efficiencies
  - comparative analysis on initial state to end state
  - mutually-agreed success factors

### Collaboration

GOA supports initial identification of need and embarks on building the program management framework by AND Villages.

AND Villages is understood to be the future development /project manager for regional home building across participating municipalities within the region.

Rural municipalities are supported by GOA with funding for housing and acknowledgement of challenges and needs, solved by adding housing choice.

GOA meets higher-level objectives providing housing supply in niche, rural areas in Alberta.

### Initial Assumptions for GOA Grant of \$10M

- Based on 8 project sites (in 8 municipalities), each with one building and surface parking on a 1 acre “ready” municipal site
- Each project has 12 two-bedroom units of 1,000 sq ft each
- Estimated project cost \$3.5M
  - \$1.2M Cash (34%)
  - \$2.3M Construction Financing (66%)
  - Municipal financing guarantee, based on Municipal Affairs providing increased municipal borrowing capacity
- Estimated Program cost over 8 sites \$28M
  - \$9.6M Cash (34%)
  - \$18.4M Construction Financing (66%)

### HOW Cash Flows

- GOA Grant Funding \$10M:
  - \$400K to REDA for program framework and management
  - \$9.6M Total Municipal Funding (\$1.2M to each participating municipality)
- REDA as program funds administrator:
  - Engage AND Villages: 1) as consultant to finalize program, and 2) as program manager, to construct each project
  - Receive \$1.2M cash plus ready site from each participating municipality
- Municipalities as loan recipients (\$2.3M each)
- Net revenues returned to municipalities for further Regional Roof Raising program investment (i.e., the next 12-unit project)

### Sample Phases and Deliverables per Phase

Phase 1	Sample Deliverables for Q3 2023   Q1 2024 (6 months)	Estimate
Step 1:	Situation analysis and establish a municipal advisory group	\$15,000
Step 2:	Regular municipal advisory meetings	\$7,000
Step 3:	Regional inventory, establish scope, issues, and gap analysis	\$125,000
Step 4:	Investment readiness management for municipalities	\$40,000
Step 5:	Program marketing, community key messages, value proposition	\$25,000
Admin	Reports, communications, website, meetings	\$35,000
Expenses	travel, room rent, meetings, disbursements, copies, etc	\$12,000

Phase 2	Sample Deliverables for Q2 2024 - Q2 2025 (12 months)	Estimate
Step 1:	Continued municipal advisory meetings	\$14,000
Step 2:	Support, coordinate grant application to GOA for municipalities	\$33,000
Step 3:	Grant disbursements to municipalities (@\$1.2M each)	\$9,600,000
Step 4:	Contract & partnership management through construction	\$35,000
Admin	Reports, communications, website mgmt, meetings	\$47,000
Expenses	travel, room rent, meetings, disbursements, copies, etc	\$12,000

**Phase 1 Investment Estimate**

**\$259,000**

**Phase 2 Investment Estimate**

**\$9,741,000**

**Sample Letter #1**

[Municipality Letterhead]

[Date: Month Day, Year]

**Honourable Mr. Jason Nixon**

Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services

Office of the Minister

Seniors, Community and Social Services

227 Legislature Building

10800 - 97 Avenue

Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

E-mail: [SCSS.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:SCSS.minister@gov.ab.ca)

**Subject: Support for Regional Initiative to address Housing Supply**

Dear Minister Nixon,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. We, representatives of Municipality X, are writing to express our keen support for AND Villages' Regional Solution for Housing Supply proposal for proof of concept. This housing supply initiative holds immense promise for our region by effectively addressing the region's pressing need for housing choice and market movement to bolster the overall well-being of our communities.

As you are aware, access to housing is a critical concern for our economic development. The lack of suitable housing options fails to support the initiatives and movement we gain in jobs, economy, and business. We need attention to both housing and economic development initiatives. AND Villages' proposed regional solution aligns with our municipality's goals and aspirations. The Alberta SW Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA) is the right vehicle to execute the program.

The proposed framework, with provincial financial support, would enable us to expedite the development of housing projects that cater to a diverse range of needs across the region.

Our municipality is prepared to contribute wholeheartedly to this initiative: We are committed to:

- Collaborating with participating municipalities and our REDA
- Vending in a 1 acre municipally owned parcel,
- Ensuring planning and servicing for the parcel,
- Working with the Province to review our municipal borrowing powers,
- Working with the province and participating in reporting progress,
- Working with AND Villages to build the program and follow through, streamlining planning and permitting processes, to occupancy

We understand that the success of this initiative hinges on strong collaboration between the provincial government, our REDA, our private partner AND Villages, and participating municipalities, and we are ready to play our part.

We kindly request the support of Seniors, Community, and Social Services in facilitating this initiative. Grant funding of \$10M as proposed in two phases would ensure the successful realization of our housing goals within the proposed 18-24 month timeline.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this initiative further and to work closely with your esteemed ministry to improve housing accessibility and affordability in our region.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Title] [Contact Information]

Cc: David Williams, Seniors, Community, and Social Services [David.E.Williams@gov.ab.ca](mailto:David.E.Williams@gov.ab.ca)  
Bev Thornton, AlbertaSW Regional Alliance [bev@albertasouthwest.com](mailto:bev@albertasouthwest.com)  
Karin Finley, AND Villages Ltd. [karin@andvillages.ca](mailto:karin@andvillages.ca)

## Sample letter #2

[Municipality Letterhead]

[Date: Month Day, Year]

**Honourable Mr. Jason Nixon**

Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services

Office of the Minister

Seniors, Community and Social Services

227 Legislature Building

10800 - 97 Avenue

Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

E-mail: [SCSS.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:SCSS.minister@gov.ab.ca)

**Subject: Support for Regional Initiative to address Housing Supply**

Dear Minister Nixon,

I trust this letter finds you well. We are writing on behalf of Municipality Y to express our wholehearted endorsement of AND Villages' Regional Solution for Housing Supply proposal for proof of concept. This initiative represents a remarkable opportunity to address the housing challenges we face and to collaboratively work towards providing a catalyst for housing in our municipality and region.

Municipality Y has a growing need for diversity of housing, and we firmly believe that this initiative will greatly alleviate the housing shortage. We are committed to a framework that involves provincial financial support, review of municipal borrowing powers and extension of limits as needed, and streamlined reporting mechanisms, as these actions ensure a structured approach that maximizes the impact of available resources.

Our community is enthusiastic about actively participating in the implementation of this initiative. We are committed to facilitating the necessary zoning changes, expediting the permitting process, and working closely with AND Villages to ensure the timely completion of housing projects. The proposed timeline of 18-24 months aligns well with our goals and reflects the urgency of the housing situation.

The associated reporting requirements are viewed positively, as they enable accountability and transparency. Municipality Y is fully prepared to provide the required data and progress updates to demonstrate the outcomes of our collective efforts.

We kindly request support from Seniors, Community and Social Services and provincial support to make this initiative a reality. Provincial investment of capital and in expanded borrowing powers is critical in helping us achieve our shared objective of enhancing housing availability within our community.

Thank you for your consideration. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to collaborate with your ministry in advancing this initiative and creating a positive impact on the lives of our residents.

Warm regards,

[Your Name] [Your Title] [Contact Information]

Cc: David Williams, Seniors, Community, and Social Services [David.E.Williams@gov.ab.ca](mailto:David.E.Williams@gov.ab.ca)

Bev Thornton, AlbertaSW Regional Alliance [bev@albertasouthwest.com](mailto:bev@albertasouthwest.com)

Karin Finley, AND Villages Ltd. [karin@andvillages.ca](mailto:karin@andvillages.ca)

### Sample Letter #3

[Municipality Letterhead]

[Date: Month Day, Year]

**Honourable Mr. Jason Nixon**

Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services

Office of the Minister

Seniors, Community and Social Services

227 Legislature Building

10800 - 97 Avenue

Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

E-mail: [SCSS.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:SCSS.minister@gov.ab.ca)

**Subject: Support for Regional Initiative to address Housing Supply**

Dear Minister Nixon,

We, Council representatives of Municipality Z, are writing to convey our unequivocal support for AND Villages' Regional Solution for Housing Supply proposal. This proof of concept holds immense promise in addressing the critical housing shortage in our region and aligns seamlessly with our municipality's vision for a vibrant, diverse, and growth-oriented community.

Municipality Z has been grappling with a shortage of available housing options, affecting families, individuals, and our local economy. We believe that the proposed framework, coupled with provincial financial support and our willingness to review municipal borrowing powers and limits, will catalyze the development of housing projects that cater to diverse needs and income levels, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life in our community and providing a path for growth into the future.

We are fully committed to realizing success of the proof of concept and are prepared to collaborate with local stakeholders, streamline administrative processes, and expedite the necessary approvals to ensure the timely completion of housing projects. The proposed timeline of 18-24 months is ambitious yet realistic, and we are dedicated to doing our part to make it a reality.

We humbly request the support of Seniors, Community and Social Services to realize this vision. Your partnership is invaluable in ensuring the effective implementation of the Regional Solution for Housing Supply, efficient financial tools are leveraged, and addressing the pressing housing needs in our region.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We eagerly await the opportunity to work closely with your ministry and make meaningful progress toward achieving our shared housing goals.

Sincerely,

[Your Name] [Your Title] [Contact Information]

Cc: David Williams, Seniors, Community, and Social Services [David.E.Williams@gov.ab.ca](mailto:David.E.Williams@gov.ab.ca)

Bev Thornton, AlbertaSW Regional Alliance [bev@albertasouthwest.com](mailto:bev@albertasouthwest.com)

Karin Finley, AND Villages Ltd. [karin@andvillages.ca](mailto:karin@andvillages.ca)



# INFORMATION BRIEF

Meeting: September 25, 2023  
Agenda Item: 7

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## BY-ELECTION RESULTS

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### **\*DESCRIPTION:**

With the resignation of Mayor Chelsae Petrovic following her election as MLA for Livingstone-Macleod on May 29, 2023, the vacancy of her position needed to be filled by holding a by-election as there was more than 12 months before the next municipal election on October 20, 2025. With the resignation of Councillor Brad Schlossberger to run for Mayor, the By-Elections for Mayor and Councillor could be held together.

By-Election Day was Monday, September 18, 2023 at the Claresholm Community Centre.

An Advance Vote was held on Wednesday, September 6, 2023. On By-Election Day, the Town also offered an Institutional Vote at Claresholm General Hospital, Willow Creek Continuing Care Centre, Porcupine Hills Lodge, Cottonwood Village, Heritage Manor and Parkside Manor. At each location, the residents appreciated being able to vote at home.

Voter turnout is estimated to be 30% of eligible voters.

Since the count between the top two candidates for Councillor was only separated by 4 votes, the Returning Officer chose to complete a recount of the ballots. This was done on Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. The recount only resulted in a change of one vote, and did not change the outcome of the election of Diana Ross as the new Claresholm Town Councillor.

Thank you to all nominees for their willingness to put their names forward to serve the community.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Official Results – Friday, September 22, 2023 at noon

### **APPLICABLE LEGISLATION:**

- *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, Chapter M-26
- *Local Authorities Election Act*, RSA 2000, Chapter L-21

PREPARED BY: Karine Keys, Chief Returning Officer

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APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney, CAO

DATE: September 21, 2023

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**Town of Claresholm  
By-Election  
September 18, 2023  
Official Results**

(Results became official on Friday, September 22, 2023 at Noon)

**ELECTED**

**MAYOR (1 position):**

**Hall, Lon - 376**

**Schlossberger, Brad - 569**

**COUNCILLOR (1 position):**

**Dixon, Chris Jason - 177**

**Jodoin, Ryley - 160**

**MacPherson, Shaun - 295**

**Ross, Diana P. - 300**

**Voter turnout is estimated to be about 30% of eligible voters.**



# INFORMATION BRIEF

Meeting: September 25, 2023

Agenda Item: 8

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## INVITATION TO FIRE DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE

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### **DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:**

The Claresholm Fire Department will be hosting a two-part open house on the afternoon of Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> 2023 to coincide with Fire Prevention Week 2023.

The theme of Fire Prevention Week 2023 is: *Cooking Safety Starts with YOU. Pay Attention to Fire Prevention.* The first portion of the open house will be directed towards the general community, there will be information stations, apparatus / hall tours, meet & greet with CFD members, and a safety presentation given by our Fire Prevention / Information officer, Captain George Douros, and will run from 1pm until at least 2pm. The second part will focus on recruitment of members for the department, starting at 3pm. Again, members will be on site to answer questions from interested individuals, inform them of training and commitment requirements, and provide applications should they be interested in taking the next step.

### **DISCUSSION/OPTIONS:**

Claresholm Fire Department would like to extend an invitation to Mayor and Councilors to attend our open house starting at 1pm on the afternoon of October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1.) none

### **APPLICABLE LEGISLATION:**

- 1.) None

PREPARED BY: Craig White – Fire Chief

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APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney -- CAO

DATE: September 21, 2023

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# INFORMATION BRIEF

Meeting: September 25, 2023  
Agenda Item: 9

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## Understanding & Responding to the Challenges Faced by FCSS Programs in Rural Alberta

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**DESCRIPTION:** There are at present, 210 local FCSS programs across Alberta providing services to 316 municipalities and Metis Settlements. FCSS programs are vitally important “preventative” social service programs aiding vulnerable Albertans. Of late, our offices have become “the only place in town” to seek assistance face-to-face. These programs are facing increasing pressures that are negatively impacting their capacity to serve those in need. The report highlights three key challenges.

**BACKGROUND:** Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities at the University of Alberta prepared a report for Rural Municipalities of Alberta

### **DISCUSSION/OPTIONS:**

FCSS programs are meant to enhance protective factors to improve well-being and prevent problems before they occur or at an early stage before they require crisis supports. The creation and structure of programming decisions are strongly rooted in their local communities.

#### Challenge 1: Insufficient Provincial Funding

- program costs have been rapidly increasing in the past 5 years
- GOA funding has remained largely stagnant since 2015.
- A small increase of \$5 million was received in 2023
- Relying on grant funding but no staff or time to apply for or manage
- Majority of FCSS are reliant on municipal contributions well above their required 20%
- Transition from Parent Link Centre to Family Resource Network model resulted in FCSSs having to compete for smaller pool of funding.

#### Challenge 2: The Increasing Inaccessibility of Provincial Social Service in Rural Alberta

- Ongoing centralization of support services has generated challenges
- Challenges have multiplied since GOA’s decision to transition to 1-800 intake and online portals
- More community members approach FCSS office for help causing additional pressure for offices to help beyond their mandate
- Extra intervention-type services incur extra cost with no hope of reimbursement

#### Challenge 3: Changing and increasing Social Needs in Rural Communities

- FCSS programs across Alberta are encountering far more community members with more complex social needs than ever
- The number of people in crisis has increased dramatically
- Additional burdens to offices to provide intervention-type services incurs extra cost and no hope for reimbursement

Policy Recommendations:

1. Increase core funding from the Government of Alberta
2. Increase the accessibility of provincial social support services for rural Albertans
3. Ensure that future public policy related to social service delivery in Alberta is approached via a rural lens
4. Ensure that social service policy in Alberta is designed with meaningful contributions from rural FCSS programs.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1.) Report: Understanding and Responding to the Challenges Faced by FCSS Programs in Rural Alberta

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION:

- 1.) none

PREPARED BY: Barbara Bell -FCSS Director

---

APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney – CAO

DATE: September 22, 2023

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A Report Prepared for the Rural Municipalities of Alberta by the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities at the University of Alberta

# Understanding and Responding to the Challenges Faced by FCSS Programs in Rural Alberta

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## Authors

**Clark Banack, PhD**  
*Director, Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities*  
University of Alberta

**Laticia Chapman, PhD Candidate**  
*Senior Research Associate, Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities*  
University of Alberta

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## \* ABOUT THE ALBERTA CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC), located at the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta in Camrose, has, since its founding in 2009, assisted rural communities in meeting diverse challenges across many areas of public policy through fostering constructive dialogue, promoting interdisciplinary and collaborative research, and developing partnerships. The ACSRC's mission is to link the research, outreach, and educational capacity of the University of Alberta with students, researchers, rural communities, rural community organizations, and policy makers at multiple levels across the province, nationally, and internationally in order to support the improved sustainability of rural communities and populations.

Thinking respectfully and reciprocally with, not just for, rural communities is a main objective of the ACSRC. Through dialogue and collaboration, the ACSRC operates an outreach program that provides direction and stimulates innovation in the development of rural communities. This is built around various collaborations with educational institutions, municipalities, and not-for-profit organizations on research projects that seek to create resilient rural communities across Alberta.

Recently, the ACSRC has been engaged in rural-focused projects related to substantiable economic development opportunities, community mental health, the delivery of social services, enhancing inclusivity, advancing the transition to renewable energy, aiding municipal collaboration, and better understanding both rural public opinion and rural-based populism. To read more about the ACSRC and the work it does, please visit: [www.acsrc.ca](http://www.acsrc.ca).

## \* ABOUT THE RURAL MUNICIPALITIES OF ALBERTA (RMA) & THE PROJECT

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) advocates on behalf of Alberta's rural municipalities. The RMA's members consist of 63 municipal districts and counties, five specialized municipalities, and the Special Areas Board. The RMA's 69 members have several common traits: large land masses, small populations, and a lack of a traditional "population centre." RMA members provide municipal governance to approximately 85% of Alberta's land mass; Alberta is unique in Canada in that municipalities govern land throughout the entire province, from border to border.

Because Alberta's rural municipalities provide municipal governance to large, sparsely populated, and often isolated areas, efficient and high-quality delivery of municipal services is an ongoing challenge that often requires innovative solutions and partnerships with neighbouring towns and villages. It also means that provincial services readily available in urban areas are limited or inaccessible to rural residents, especially those without access to a personal vehicle.

For several years, the RMA has heard from members that reductions in provincial social service availability in rural communities combined with stagnation in provincial funding for municipally-operated family and community support services (FCSS) has led to unprecedented pressure on FCSS agencies to act as a catch-all for a range of social needs in rural communities, including many beyond their mandates. Similar pressure has been put on rural municipalities to contribute funding to FCSS services well beyond their formal requirement under the *Family and Community Support Services Act*.

As social challenges are often overlooked and under-reported in rural Alberta, the RMA prioritized the need to "dig deeper" on this issue to determine whether these concerns were as serious as members described, and whether they were widespread across the province. The work undertaken by the ACSRC provides some powerful evidence as to the reality of this issue in rural Alberta and will allow the RMA to continue to advocate for improved delivery of provincial social services and adequate funding of FCSS programs in rural communities.

# \* EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Family and community support service (FCSS) programs have provided vitally important “preventative” social service programming to vulnerable Albertans for several decades. FCSS programs remain a critical staple of community life in rural Alberta in particular, often existing as the “only place in town” for rural Albertans in need to seek assistance face-to-face. However, these rural-based programs are facing increasing pressures that are negatively impacting their capacity to serve those in need. This report highlights three key challenges faced by rural FCSS programs in Alberta and responds with four policy recommendations.

## Key Challenges

### 1. Insufficient Provincial Funding

FCSS program costs have been rapidly increasing in the past five years, placing significant stress on their operations. Government of Alberta (GOA) funding (meant to equate to 80% of FCSS’s core funding) has remained largely stagnant since 2015. The majority of rural FCSS offices are increasingly reliant on municipal contributions well above their required twenty percent. However, rural municipalities do not have unlimited budgets, and are only able to make up so much of the shortfall created by the province refusing to meaningfully increase FCSS funding.

### 2. The Increasing Inaccessibility of Provincial Social Services in Rural Alberta

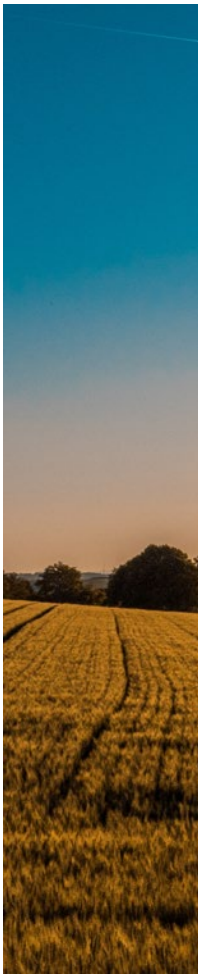
The ongoing centralization of social support services in Alberta has generated challenges for rural FCSS programs; challenges that have only multiplied with recent GOA decisions to transition to “1-800” intake lines and online web portals for several social service supports. As rural FCSS offices are often “the only shop in town,” they face a disproportionate burden compared to most of their urban counterparts, as more and more community members approach FCSS offices for help. This places additional pressure on rural FCSS offices to go beyond their mandate and provide intervention-type services, incurring the extra cost this entails with no hope of being reimbursed.

### 3. Changing and Increasing Social Needs in Rural Communities

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent period of inflation, FCSS programs across rural Alberta are encountering far more community members with more complex social needs than ever before. The number of people who are walking through the doors of rural FCSS offices in crisis has increased dramatically in the past few years, placing additional burdens on these offices to provide intervention-type services and incur the extra cost and effort this entails with no hope of being reimbursed.

## Policy Recommendations:

1. Increase core funding from the Government of Alberta.
2. Increase the accessibility of provincial social support services for rural Albertans.
3. Ensure that future public policy related to social service delivery in Alberta is approached via a rural lens.
4. Ensure that social service policy in Alberta is designed with meaningful contributions from rural FCSS programs.



## \* SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Family and community support service (FCSS) programs provide effective and vitally important “preventative” social service programming to vulnerable community members of all ages throughout Alberta. In an era of ongoing centralization of social service supports in the province, FCSS programs remain a staple of rural community life, often existing as the only physical location where rural Albertans in need can seek assistance face-to-face. These offices are staffed with hardworking and caring individuals who go above and beyond in serving their communities.

However, these rural-based programs are facing increasing pressures related to stagnant provincial funding, the centralization of provincial social service supports, and enhanced social challenges faced by vulnerable community members in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent period of rapid inflation. These challenges are pushing many rural FCSS programs to the brink, negatively affecting some of the most vulnerable members of rural communities and placing pressure on rural municipalities to shoulder an ever-increasing share of the costs of FCSS programming — a share that is now routinely in excess of the 20% mandated by provincial legislation.

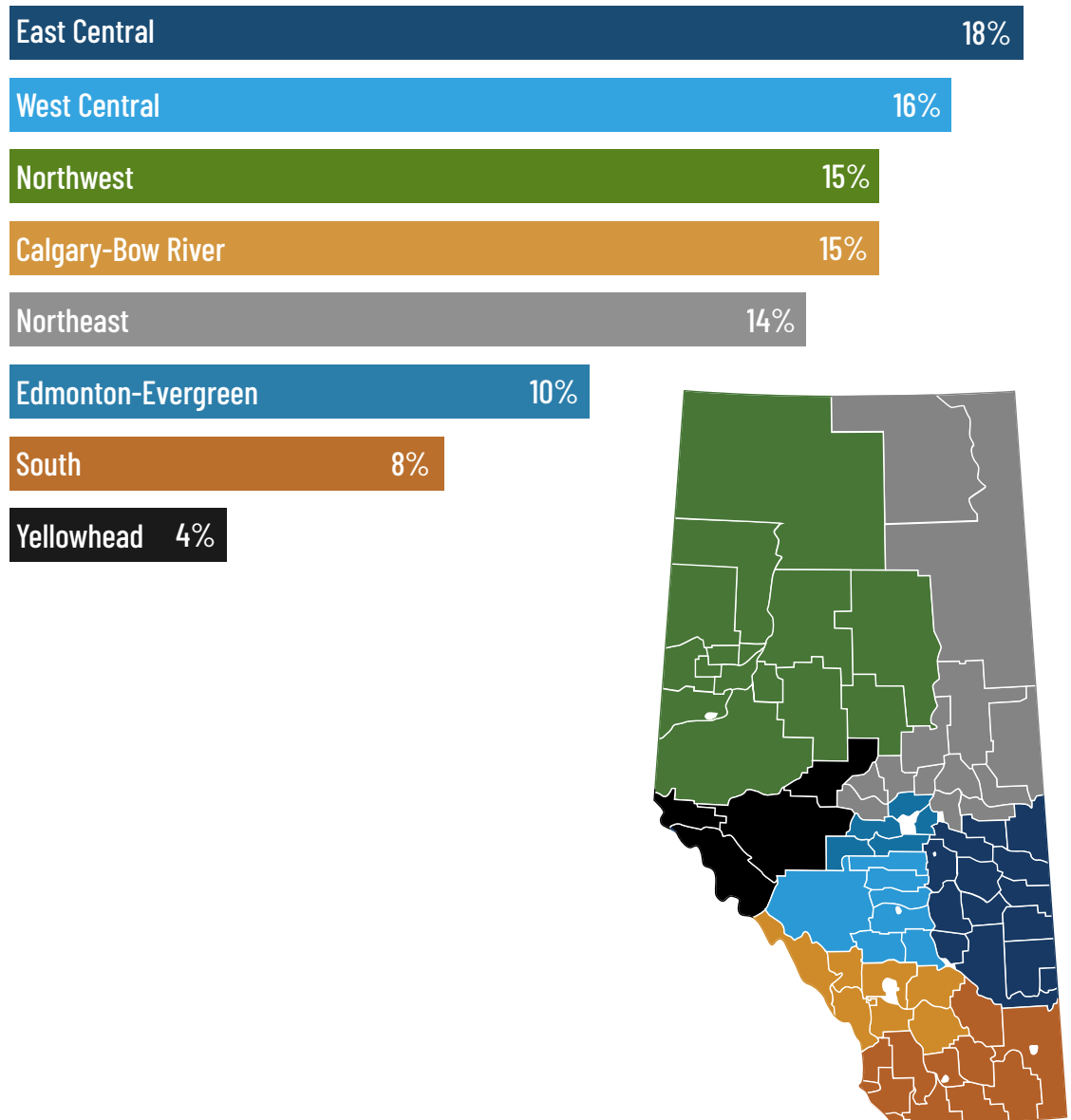
The Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC) at the University of Alberta was tasked by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) to conduct a deep dive into the contemporary challenges faced by rural FCSS programs across Alberta and the subsequent burdens being placed on rural municipalities.

To complete this task, the research team utilized a mixed-method study design that was reviewed and approved by the research ethics board of the University of Alberta

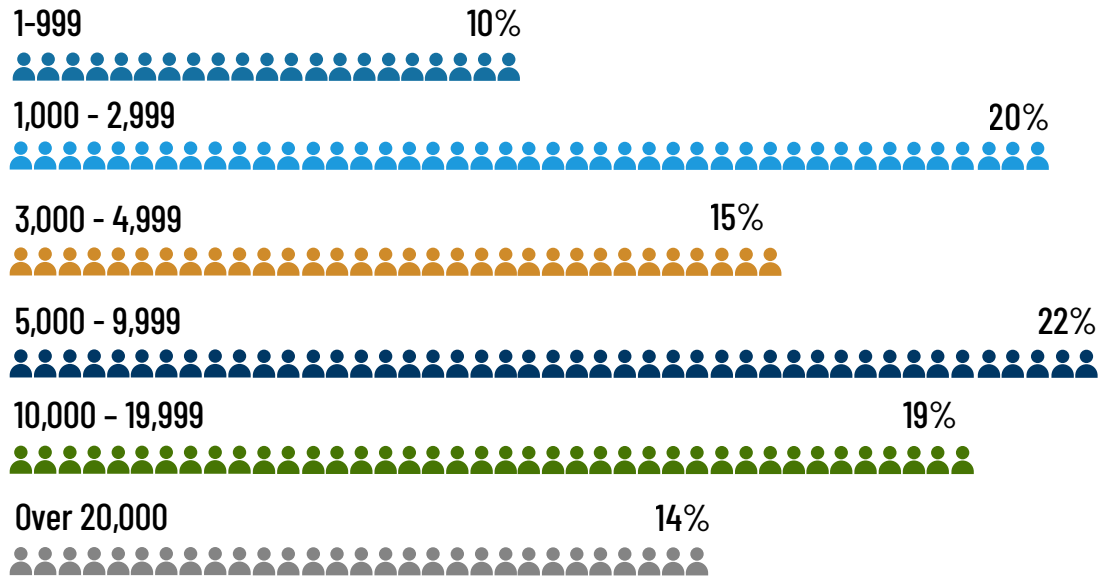
(Pro00124133). The research began by conducting 20 semi-structured, in-depth, one-on-one interviews with individuals deemed knowledgeable about this topic. Those interviewed included 16 different directors of rural and smalltown FCSS programs across Alberta, one member of the Family and Community Support Service Association of Alberta (FCSSAA), and three separate Government of Alberta employees with significant experience working with rural FCSS programs. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, were conducted online using Zoom, and were transcribed for thematic analysis by the research team.

After completing all 20 interviews, the research team designed a 38-question survey to further explore the depth of the challenges faced by rural FCSS programs identified in the interviews. This survey was conducted online, was emailed to the directors of 158 FCSS programs scattered across rural and smalltown Alberta and received a total of 80 respondents. As Figure 1 and Figure 2, page 8 suggest, the survey respondents provided a representative sample of rural FCSS programs from across the province. Not only did the research team receive a good number of replies from each FCSS region, they also received responses from various sizes and structures of FCSS programs in Alberta.

**Figure 1: What FCSS region is your program located in?**



**Figure 2: How large is the population your FCSS program serves?**



The results of this study, discussed in detail throughout the report, were derived from an analysis of both the qualitative interview portion and the quantitative survey portion described above. In short, the research team found that rural FCSS offices are facing several important challenges that impact their capacity to address the social needs that are arising in their communities. After a brief description of the FCSS program in general (, page 9), the report delves into three specific and interlocking challenges and describe their implications for rural FCSS offices, rural Albertans in need, and rural municipalities in general (Section 3: Key Challenges, page 13). The report closes with four policy recommendations for the Government of Alberta (GOA) that would, if implemented, contribute to re-establishing the full capacities of rural FCSS offices, positively impact the lives of many of rural Alberta’s most vulnerable citizens who are currently being poorly served, and substantially relieve the additional FCSS-related fiscal load rural municipalities are being asked to shoulder in the current environment.



## \* SECTION 2: WHAT ARE FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES?

Social service delivery in Alberta is a complex file stretching across a variety of provincial ministries, agencies, and organizations. Family and community support services (FCSS) sit amid this complicated web, currently existing within the Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services, but frequently collaborating with agencies from the ministries of Health, Education, Children’s Services, and Mental Health and Addiction, among others.

With a history stretching back to 1966, there are now 210 local FCSS programs across Alberta providing services to 316 municipalities and Métis Settlements, most of which can be designated as “rural” or “small town.”<sup>1</sup> All but a handful of FCSS programs are represented by the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA), a member-driven organization that brings FCSS directors and staff together for educational and networking opportunities, while also representing FCSS programs to various stakeholders,

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1 Technically, FCSS does not make any formal distinction between rural vs. urban, although there do exist strong perceptions among FCSS directors that “rural” FCSS programs, however defined, face distinct challenges from “urban” programs. Although it is possible to select a formal measure to define rural from urban, there is little reason to do so in this context given that there exist many FCSS programming partnerships across Alberta between low population / low density rural counties or villages and higher population cities (for example, the partnership between the City of Camrose and Camrose County under the umbrella of Camrose and District Social Services) that make drawing a divide between rural and urban especially complicated when it comes to FCSS.



especially the Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Fundamentally, the mandate of FCSS programs is to provide preventive social services, defined as “a proactive process that strengthens the protective factors of individuals, families, and communities to promote well-being, reduce vulnerabilities, enhance quality of life, and empowers them to meet the challenges of life.” More specifically, FCSS programs are meant to enhance “protective factors to improve well-being and prevent problems before they occur or at an early stage before they require crisis supports.”<sup>2</sup>

FCSS programs are governed by the provincial *Family and Community Support Services Act*, although both their creation and the structure and programming decisions they make are strongly rooted in their local communities. When a municipality or Métis Settlement council decides to establish an FCSS program, they enter into an agreement with the Government of Alberta to jointly fund projects, services, or both. Since 1966, the funding model has been set at an 80/20 split, with the province meant to provide 80% of the core funding for FCSS programming and the municipality providing the remaining 20%.<sup>3</sup> As of 2023, the total annual provincial funding for FCSS programs across Alberta is \$105 million. Importantly, the FCSS model also relies upon what was described to the research team as “the multiplier effect.” In essence, the funds contributed by the provincial and municipal governments are further buttressed by significant on-the-ground volunteer participation, especially from community organizations who partner with local FCSS offices on a variety of programming. This significantly extends the reach of FCSS programming. In 2021, FCSS programs across Alberta reported more than 47,850 volunteers contributing over 1,295,700 volunteer hours annually.



## The Importance of Local Autonomy

Since 1981, local FCSS offices have had considerable autonomy to structure their programs and design their day-to-day programming in ways that are best suited to meet the local conditions in their respective communities. Indeed, “local responsibility for decision-making” remains a key principle of the entire FCSS program. Although the GOA is meant to provide the bulk of program funding, municipalities and Métis Settlements must “decide how to allocate the funding to best meet the needs and priorities of the community — within the FCSS

- 2 “Family and Community Support Services Accountability Framework,” Government of Alberta, December 2022.
- 3 For a more detailed history of FCSS in Alberta, as well as more information of the variety of regulations FCSS programs must follow, see: “Understanding FCSS,” published by the *Family and Community Social Services Association of Alberta*. Available at: <https://fcssaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/FCSS-101-All-Modules-2021.pdf>



mandate”.<sup>4</sup> This concept was repeatedly highlighted as a strength of the FCSS model in our study, a conclusion that coincides with academic literature on rural community development, which frequently stresses the importance of local autonomy as a key ingredient in program success across issues<sup>5</sup>. Unsurprisingly, this autonomy has also ensured a good deal of variation across FCSS programs in Alberta — there is no standard FCSS model in the province.

At the municipal level, FCSS programs can be operated directly by single municipalities, as multi-municipal programs, or in partnerships. The single municipality structure is most common. In a multi-municipal program, two or more municipalities join as a “regional” or “district” FCSS program, and each participating municipality makes its 20% contribution to the program budget. In a partnering or “grant transfer” FCSS organization, neighbouring municipalities agree to give some or all of their FCSS funds to one of the municipalities to provide services to residents of the partnering municipalities.

In addition to these three possible program structures, FCSS also offers three different models of program administration: the FCSS department (or FCSS program), the community services department, or direct municipal management. An FCSS department has a designated FCSS program director and FCSS staff who are municipal employees and report to a manager or CAO. In a community services department arrangement, FCSS is part of a larger municipal department that provides other services like recreation. Under direct municipal management, the FCSS manager or CAO administers the FCSS program and reports directly to council, which has oversight over FCSS funding decisions. This model is more common in smaller communities with small FCSS budgets. The community services department model is common both in smaller communities and in larger cities, and the FCSS department model is popular in municipalities with medium-sized budgets.<sup>6</sup> There are also six FCSS non-profit societies. In these programs, FCSS staff are employees of the non-profit society, not municipal employees. Although they are independent of the municipality, non-profit FCSS programs are still mandated to provide programming that meets community needs and priorities.<sup>7</sup>

Day-to-day programming also varies across FCSS programs; several interview respondents spoke passionately about the importance of tailoring programming to specific community needs. The most frequently mentioned programs across all FCSS offices included parent and family support, early childhood development, and youth programs. FCSS directors also described programs to benefit seniors, including home support and organized opportunities for social interaction to combat isolation, as key components of their mandate. Annual volunteer appreciation events, providing welcoming services for newcomers to the community, and low-income tax clinics are three other examples of commonly provided services in small and rural FCSS programs. Helping connect community members in need to the provincial and federal benefit and support services they are entitled to also falls within FCSS’s mandate.

Certain types of support services fall outside of the FCSS mandate and are thus ineligible to be supported with FCSS funding. These include services that are primarily recreational or leisure-oriented in nature; services that offer direct assistance such as money, food, or

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4 See: “Understanding FCSS”

5 See: Yolande E. Chan, Jeffery A. Dixon, and Christine R. Dukelow, *Revitalizing Rural Economies*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2013

6 “FCSS Program Structure, Administration and Delivery,” published by the Family and Community Social Services Association of Alberta, p.2. Available at: <https://fcssaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/FCSS-101-All-Modules-2021.pdf>

7 “FCSS Program Structure, Administration and Deliver,” p.2

shelter; services which could be classified as intervention or rehabilitation; and services which duplicate programs that are the responsibility of a different ministry or government agency.<sup>8</sup>

## The Reality of FCSS Programs in Rural and Small Town Alberta

The research team heard repeatedly throughout this study that the FCSS office is often the only social service agency in rural communities. As this report will demonstrate, this is an important consideration that plays a central role in the challenges FCSS programs face across rural Alberta.

Given that they are often “the only shop in town,” rural FCSS programs are likely to spend a large portion of their funding on direct service delivery, including salaries for employees who provide direct service delivery. In general, this contrasts with larger urban FCSS programs, which tend to grant their funds to the myriad other community service organizations that exist to offer programming in urban centres rather than deliver programming themselves.

Where there are other social service agencies and community-based non-profits, rural FCSS offices often play a coordinating role. In addition to managing their own FCSS funds and outside grants, FCSS programs will often act as the banker or guarantor for community non-profits, helping them to write grants, manage funds, and fulfill reporting requirements. Several of the rural FCSS directors interviewed described this as a community development role: they want to reduce barriers for the community non-profit sector and see FCSS as having an important role in making funding accessible to local non-profit organizations.

Finally, while all the FCSS directors interviewed expressed their support for prevention as the core of FCSS services, it is also clear that provincial stipulations around funding only preventative programming frequently conflict with daily realities in rural communities. Many directors emphasized that rural FCSS programs serve as social service “catch-alls.” In the words of one director, “In rural communities, if you need help and you’re not sure where to go, you go to FCSS.” Rural FCSS offices are regularly approached by community members seeking assistance that often goes beyond prevention and FCSS staff are thus frequently placed in the largely untenable situation of “staying true to their mandate” and turning people in need away or providing some type of required intervention support, an action that not only goes beyond their mandate but also requires additional effort and resources that are not reimbursed by the GOA. Unfortunately, a variety of factors have pushed FCSS offices, especially those in rural communities, in this direction, placing significant additional stress on these programs.



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8 “Understanding FCSS,” p.4



## \* SECTION 3: KEY CHALLENGES

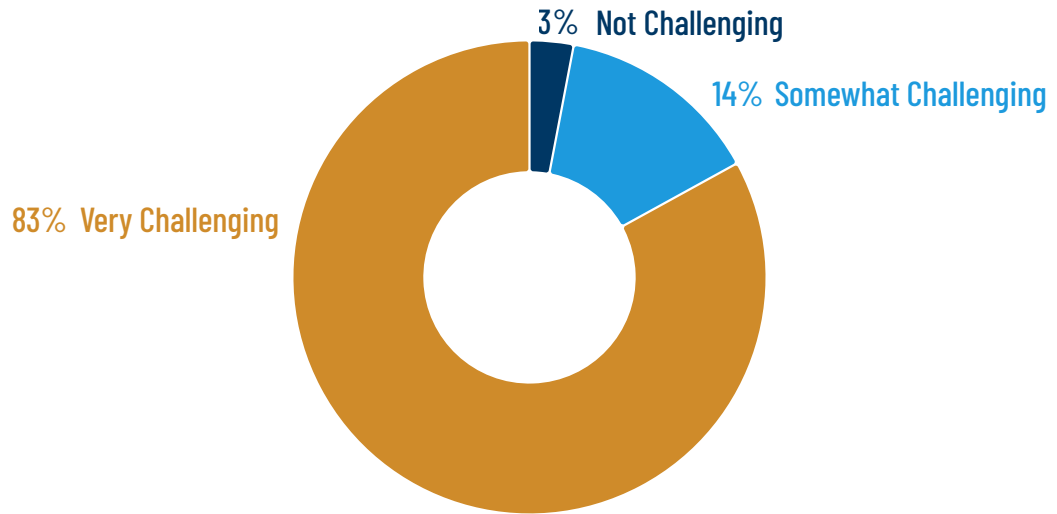
Over the course of this study the research team learned of a variety of challenges rural FCSS offices face, some specific to certain communities, others shared across the province. What follows is not a full account of all the challenges encountered, but rather a detailed consideration of three unique, complex, and often interlocking challenges that emerged as the most widespread and pressing for rural FCSS offices.

### Key Challenge 1: Insufficient Provincial Funding

The most significant challenge rural FCSS programs deal with is insufficient core funding. As mentioned in the introduction, the core programming of FCSS is meant to be funded by an 80% contribution from the GOA, with the remaining 20% from the FCSS's municipality (or municipalities). However, the overall contribution to the entire provincial FCSS program has remained stagnant at \$100 million since 2015, with a small increase of \$5 million in 2023. Given the very real challenges posed by the ongoing centralization of other social services, increasing need in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inflationary pressures of the past few years, FCSS directors across rural Alberta were unanimous in their concerns that the failure by the GOA to meaningfully increase funding is tantamount to a funding cut. Indeed, within a series of survey questions, FCSS directors were asked to rate how challenging certain issues were to their operations. On a survey question asking about stagnation of provincial funding increase since 2015, over 83% of respondents suggested that this has been "very challenging" (see Figure 3, page 14), the highest scores among all challenges listed in the survey.



**Figure 3: How challenging has the lack of a funding increase since 2015 been to your FCSS program?<sup>9 10</sup>**

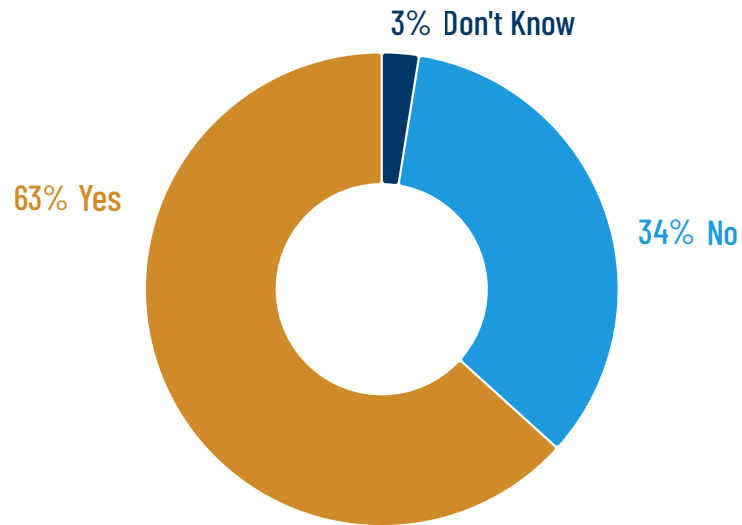


Although FCSS programs often supplement their core provincial and municipal funding with other government service contracts or grants, most rural FCSS offices increasingly rely on municipal contributions well over their required 20%. This municipal overcontribution often occurs because municipalities step in to fund programs which have become established in the community but have had provincial funding cut or are no longer affordable given rising costs of programming not being addressed with additional provincial funds. However, municipalities do not have unlimited budgets, and can make up only so much of the social service delivery shortfall created by the stagnation of provincial FCSS funding.

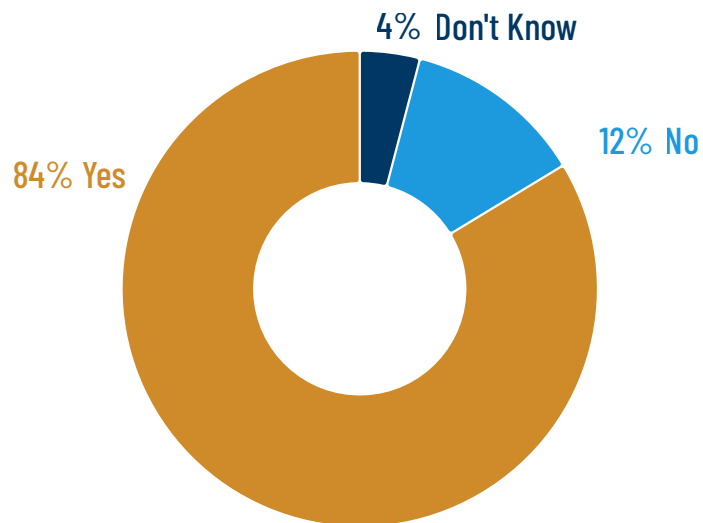
The survey results corroborated and expanded this information. Over 63% of survey respondents answered that their municipalities contribute more than the required 20% of FCSS funding (Figure 4, page 15). Almost 84% of survey respondents noticed an increase in the need for municipal overcontribution after 2018 (Figure 5, page 15). Of those respondents whose municipalities overcontribute, almost 43% estimated that the true contribution of their municipality is more than 35% of the FCSS program’s budget (Figure 6, page 16).

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- 9** For readability purposes, this data was collapsed from a survey question that employed a 10-point Likert Scale asking respondents to rate “how challenging” this was from 1 (not challenging) to 10 (extremely challenging). In this chart, scores from 1 – 3 were collapsed into “not challenging”, scores 4 – 6 were collapsed into “somewhat challenging”, and scores 7 – 10 were collapsed into “very challenging”.
- 10** This survey was completed in early 2023, before the increase in overall FCSS funding from \$100 million to \$105 million was announced by the GOA.

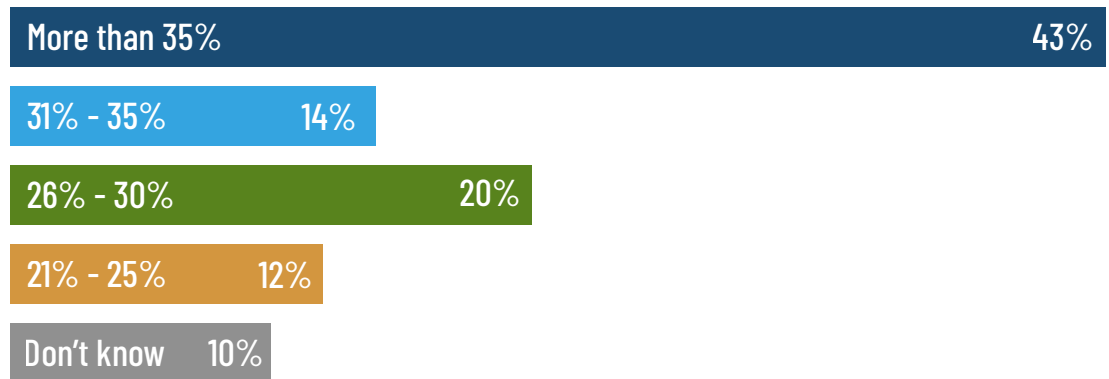
**Figure 4: Does your municipality (or municipalities) contribute more to your core funding than the required 20%?**



**Figure 5: Has the need for this municipal over-contribution increased since 2018?**



**Figure 6: If your municipality is contributing beyond 20% of your core funding, can you provide an estimate as to the true percentage that your municipality is contributing?**



Since “more than 35%” was the highest rate of overcontribution that survey respondents could choose, the survey did not capture the true rate of overcontribution in detail for municipalities with the highest rates of overcontribution. Indeed, within the interviews, the research team learned of one case wherein the municipality typically contributes about 50% of the FCSS program’s budget, but this year the contribution increased to 60%. Another director explained that their supporting municipalities will contribute more than the provincial amount this year.

Several FCSS programs are similarly growing more dependent upon outside grants for which FCSS directors must apply. Although outside grants (non-FCSS funding) make up a significant portion of some FCSS programs’ budgets, they make up very little or even none of other FCSS programs’ budgets. This is because accessing such funds depends on the capacity of individual FCSS programs. Directors and staff may or may not have the time or skillsets to identify, apply for, and manage external grants — a challenge that is especially acute for the smaller rural FCSS programs in Alberta.

Overall, the research team heard that insufficient funding is both a long-time concern and the result of recent events like the pandemic and some political decisions at the provincial level in 2019 – 2020 (to be discussed later). The funding challenges faced by rural FCSS programs can be broken down into four distinct components: insufficient operational funding, insufficient funding for staff, funding precarity / inattention to sustainability in funding, and, especially germane to this report, the funding challenges related to inattention to or lack of understanding of rurality on the part of the provincial government.



## Insufficient Operational Funding

Overall, rural FCSS programs do not feel they have the funds to adequately meet community needs. More specifically, respondents noted that there is a lack of funding to meet the operating costs for direct delivery of ongoing programs. Adequate and reliable program funding is extremely important because community members and service users come to rely on programs to support their own and their families' wellbeing. When a longstanding program is cut because of insufficient funding, this results in a loss of trust in the community and a decrease in individual and social wellbeing. As one director noted, "If we weren't seeking additional funding and partnerships, we would be offering a lot less to our communities."

As will be discussed later in the report, the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent inflationary period has resulted in several FCSS offices offering expanded or revised programming to meet emerging community needs, or simply being pulled in new directions to help those in need; this increased demand means higher staffing and material costs. Some FCSS directors interviewed seemed eager to respond to increasing and changing community needs by expanding their capacity to address a wider and more complex range of issues and taking on a larger social role in their communities. These directors noted, however, that they cannot expand their capacity without increased funding, infrastructure, training, and staffing.

It is also clear that the community-based non-profits many rural FCSS programs partner with have more financial need than the local FCSS program can meet. These groups have also been impacted by increasing community need and several rural FCSS programs are fielding increased requests for funding from these organizations, especially to fund mental health supports.

Rural FCSS directors also told us that their budgets are often too small to allow them to apply for many grants, largely because they lack the staffing capacity to do so. For similar reasons, many are unable to engage meaningfully

with evidence-based practice. Without the capacity to fund staff education, training, or research, rural FCSS programs perceive themselves to be at a disadvantage when it comes to understanding the impacts of their programming and designing more effective programs.

Ministerial-level changes to programming have also meant funding decreases for rural FCSS programs. In particular, the transition from Parent Link Centres to the Family Resource Network (FRN) model has seen FCSSs having to participate in a competitive process for a smaller pool of funding.

## The Ending of Parent Link and the Introduction of Family Resources Networks

In 2019, the Ministry of Children’s Services announced, with essentially no consultation with the rural FCSS directors we spoke with, that funding for the Parent Link program was being cancelled. This popular program, frequently administered and delivered by FCSS offices in rural communities, provided free play groups, classes, education, and social opportunities for parents of children ages six and under, in addition to early learning opportunities and developmental screening for these children. In its place, the ministry launched a funding competition for organizations to participate in local Family Resource Networks (FRNs), a program with similar goals as Parent Link, although the program was now designed to offer supports for parents and children from 0 – 18, and the total amount of funding was now smaller.

In our interviews, this shift from Parent Link to FRNs was often a flashpoint for frustration for rural FCSS directors. Not only was the loss of Parent Link problematic for many parents of young children across rural communities who benefitted from the program offerings (especially those who relied on the access to the development screening available for very young children), FCSS directors lamented the increased competition between communities in search of a smaller pool of children-focused preventative funding made available under the FRN program. Other concerns shared included the difficulty inherent in delivering programs, with less overall funding, for children aged 0 – 18, the subsequent necessity to lay off staff in certain FCSS offices, and a broader sense that the new model’s reporting structures are “a chaotic mess” compared to those that existed under Parent Link.

The FRNs are recognized by many FCSS programs as a significant funding cut to child and youth support in rural communities, and many FCSS directors also noted other problems with the FRNs including organizational structure (discussed in more detail below). As a result of the transition to the FRN model, some communities have lost early childhood services completely, and that the loss of funding because of the reorganization of children’s services is hurting rural communities.

Finally, several directors highlighted that there is an overlooked rural component to FCSS

funding needs. Basing funding on population does not consider the needs of communities with high transient populations (like tourism-based economies). More generally, population does not give an accurate picture of need in rural communities because of the added costs rural communities experience because of large, sparsely populated areas, challenging geography, often poor internet and cell phone service, and transportation costs.

Overall, several of our respondents told us that their FCSS capacity is “maxed out” — current programs have full caseloads, FCSS offices are facing increasing need in their community and increasing costs overall, provincial funding did not increase between 2015 – 2022, and municipalities are being asked to shoulder more of the load.





### Insufficient Funding for Staff

Insufficient staff funding presents several challenges for rural FCSS programs. Many rural FCSS programs have minimal staff (sometimes just one person) and many directors felt they could more effectively serve their communities if they had the funding to hire even one or two more staff. Limited funding also means that rural FCSS offices struggle to be competitive with salaries and benefits, which can make it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. Several directors brought up the challenge of trying to maintain a balance between appropriate staffing levels — and adequate compensation for qualified staff — with program funding and grants to community-based organizations.

Putting more effort into seeking outside sources of funding (e.g., other provincial, federal, private, or charitable grants) is often not an adequate solution to funding shortfalls because applying for grants requires time and expertise that is already in short supply for minimally staffed rural FCSS programs. Outside grant funding can also come with stipulations about how the grant money is to be used (e.g., developing new programs) that pull FCSS staff away from delivering core and established programs. More than one director has had to turn down grant opportunities, or be very careful when applying for outside funding, because of a lack of capacity to administer grants. Many grants also do not include wages as an eligible use of funds.

The loss of Parent Link Centres and transition to the FRNs has also had an impact on staffing at some FCSS offices. Many directors admitted that losing their Parent Link Centre caused them to significantly restructure their FCSS program and resulted in a loss of hours and staff. Many FCSS programs that were successful in applying for FRN funding noted that the FRN funding is a significantly smaller amount of money than they had received with the Parent Link program.

### Funding Precarity and the Lack of Sustainability in Funding

One of the significant stresses FCSS directors and staff experience is a sense of precarity over the future of FCSS. One respondent stated that “it seems to be this [feeling] ... always that FCSS is going to be gutted.” The people interviewed partially attribute this precarity and uncertainty to a sense of political instability in Alberta. The research team heard that there is a lack of clear signalling from the GOA that FCSS funding is secure. One director described waiting for FCSS’s next three-year agreement, which was overdue at the time of the interview, as a “nerve-wracking situation”.

Respondents also noted that formerly secure and reliable contracts are increasingly being put up for bid. One director said “We don’t know what’s going to happen” with a home care contract their FCSS has held for more than ten years. The team also heard that funding and support for FCSS programming or programs administered by FCSS is often piecemeal and short-term, with a lack of attention given to program sustainability in the face of unreliable funding.

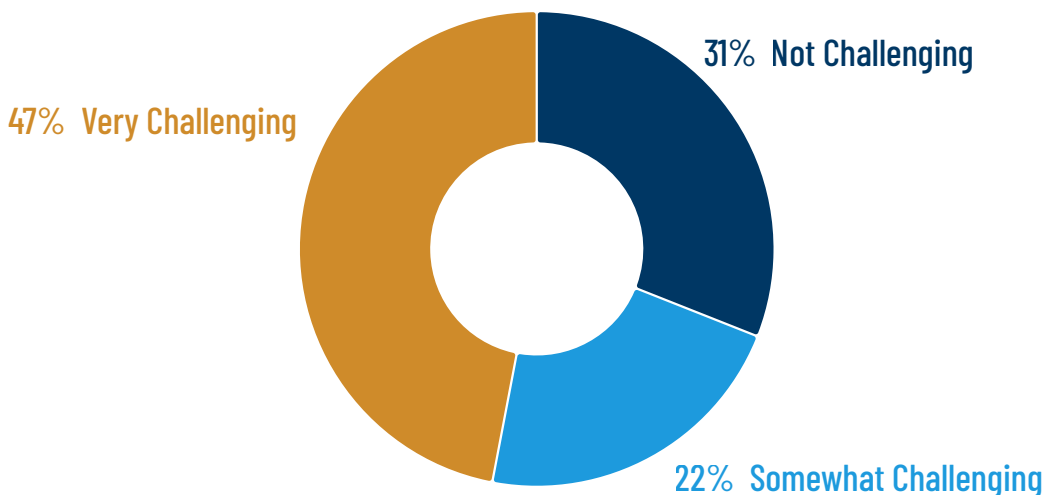
FCSS directors experience provincial funding for social services as episodic and identified the inconsistency of provincial funding and support for FCSS as a long-term problem. Several interviewees noted a pattern where the GOA will introduce a pilot program for social services

with limited-term funding (one to three years is common). In many cases, just when the program is starting to show results, the funding is inexplicitly dropped. Unexpected program restructuring and shifting government priorities contribute to challenges both in meeting government targets and in serving community members in a consistent, reliable way. From the perspective of FCSS, when funding for a program is ended, the reasons for the cut can be much better explained by a bias towards political novelty than by evidence of a need to revise policies.

The result of this sense of scarcity and instability, we were told, is increased territorialism between social service agencies. Organizations that could partner with each other instead may find themselves competing for funding. Many directors also pointed out that underfunding preventive social services ultimately results in increased social service costs. One director explained that “We put all of these dollars in ... intervention work, but if we put more money in ... prevention work ... we wouldn’t need as many dollars in intervention”.

The ending of the Parent Link program in late 2019 and early 2020 is an important example of this kind of unexpected program restructuring and funding instability. Results from the research team’s survey on this topic require some interpretation and possibly further research. In simplest terms, the survey results seem to show that the ending of the Parent Link program and its replacement with the Family Resource Network model (FRN) was either experienced as extremely challenging, or as not at all challenging. Roughly 31% of survey respondents rated the replacement of Parent Link by the FRN model as “not challenging,” while roughly 47% rated the replacement as “very challenging” (Figure 7, page 20). These two answers at opposite ends of the scale received the highest number of responses.

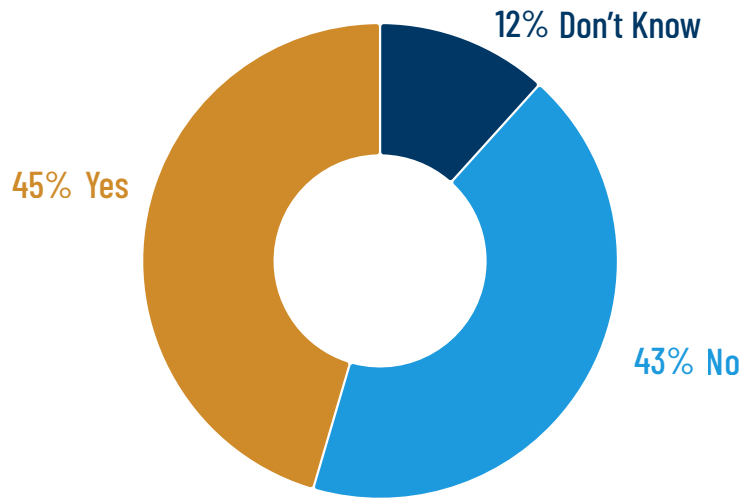
**Figure 7: How challenging was the replacement of Parent Link Centres by Family Resource Networks for your FCSS program?<sup>11</sup>**



Similarly, respondents were evenly split on the effects of ending Parent Link. Just over 45% of respondents said that their FCSS program was negatively affected by the ending of the Parent Link program, while almost 43% of respondents indicated that the ending of Parent Link did not negatively affect their program (Figure 8, page 21).

<sup>11</sup> For readability purposes, this data was collapsed from a survey question that employed a 10-point Likert Scale asking respondents to rate “how challenging” this was from 1 (not challenging) to 10 (extremely challenging). In this chart, scores from 1 – 3 were collapsed into “not challenging”, scores 4 – 6 were collapsed into “somewhat challenging” and scores 7 – 10 were collapsed into “very challenging”.

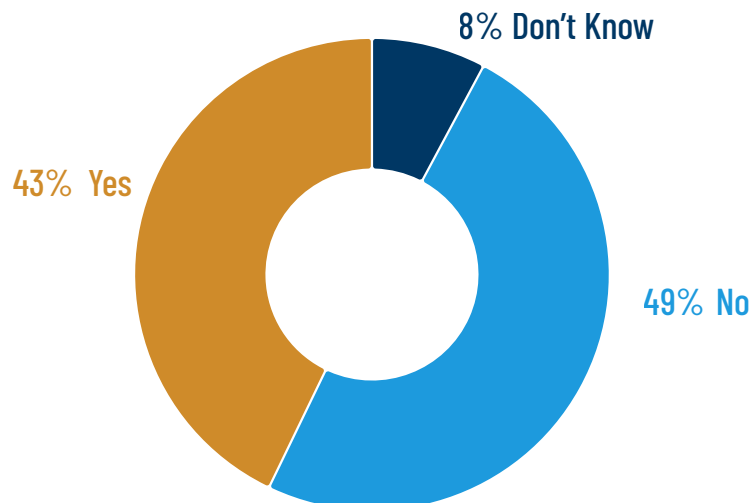
**Figure 8: Was your FCSS program negatively affected by the ending of the Parent Link program?**



Evidence given by interview participants was stronger and more clear-cut about the negative impacts of the ending of the Parent Link program and the transition to FRNs. Participants variously described the loss of Parent Link as “dramatic” and a “traumatic loss.” They described the transition to the FRNs as “abysmal” and “a chaotic mess” which introduced “a lack of clarity” about the role of FCSS in supporting child and youth development. Directors stated that the ending of Parent Link and transition to the FRN model was not just about funding. Many also expressed concerns related to a lack of clarity from the government about reporting expectations, goals and outcomes, and communication more generally.

Almost 59% of survey respondents answered that FRN funding was insufficient to adequately meet the needs of community members who had formerly attended Parent Link programming (Figure 9, page 21).

**Figure 9: Has FRN funding allowed you to adequately meet the needs of community members who formerly attended Parent Link programming?**





More than one director said that, under the FRN structure, they received about one-third of the funding they had received with Parent Link. As difficult to navigate as a two-thirds funding cut for early childhood programming must have been, the FRNs also imposed a requirement to expand the amount and type of services provided. Parent Link programs served families with children aged 0 – 6 years, while the FRNs cover ages 0 – 18. This means that FCSS programs which were successful in receiving FRN funding took on responsibility for providing services that meet the needs of families, children, and youth across a much wider range of developmental stages. Several directors expressed concern that the funding and administrative structure for the FRNs forced communities within the same region to compete for funding — something that has strained relationships between communities in certain cases.

Directors told us that in some cases their municipalities have stepped in to fund the programs that were formerly funded through Parent Link, while in other cases the loss of Parent Link and its funding had resulted in a loss of programming, jobs, and services. Directors agreed that programming for 0- to 18-year-olds was important but said that the expansion could have happened within the model already established by Parent Link. Directors agreed that the Parent Link model was much more functional, consistent, and easy to coordinate than the FRN model.

### **Rural-Specific Funding Challenges for FCSS Programs**

Being rural significantly shapes the financial needs of FCSS programs. Many of the directors interviewed feel the GOA does not understand or appreciate the unique cost-of-living and opportunity constraints faced by rural communities. In particular, the research team heard about issues related to transportation and limited access to social services in rural communities. The team also heard from northern FCSS programs about the isolation their communities face and about how a recent economic downturn due to changes in the oil and gas industry is putting strain on residents and social programs. These and similar stories suggest that it is important to pay attention not only to ruralness as a factor in the social needs of Albertans but also to variation within rural Alberta, and to the geographic, socio-cultural, and economic reasons for this variation.

Many of the issues faced by rural FCSS programs can also be framed in terms of an urban-rural divide. FCSS directors were quick to tell us that they do not measure themselves against urban FCSS programs and that there is generally open communication and sympathy within FCSSAA and between rural and urban programs. Nevertheless, urban FCSS programs have significantly greater access to both financial and human resources. The research team heard several times that resources are more likely to go to Alberta’s urban centres, and that grants tend to be geared more towards urban organizations with administrative, data collection, and analytical capacity. The knowledge that funding is more accessible to urban FCSS programs which already have larger budgets and greater personnel capacity is experienced by rural FCSS directors as a kind of arbitrary punishment: one director told us that rural communities are “penalized for being small” when it comes to accessing social service funding.

Almost every director noted that rural FCSS programs are incredibly important because there often are no other social services available in small communities. Rural FCSS directors feel that decision-makers in urban settings do not realize how few social services there are in rural



communities, which leads to underestimating the needs of rural communities and the complexity of the situations to which rural FCSS programs must respond. The research team was told that, in rural communities, FCSS programs cannot be specialized because there often are no other social service agencies, and that rural FCSS staff must be similarly flexible, adaptable, and able to wear “many different hats.” There is a strong perception on the part of rural FCSS directors that urban FCSS programs have a narrower social focus and more internal specialization due to their

proximity to other social service agencies and greater ease of access to outside professionals such as mental health counsellors. Rural FCSS directors count their flexibility and “jack of all trades” pragmatism as a strength, in part because it means that they feel connected to and knowledgeable about the social wellbeing of their communities. However, directors are aware that the flip side of being a “jack of all trades” means that there is no one else around that one can consult or bring in to offer specialized knowledge or support for complex social issues.

Directors repeatedly raised transportation as a significant barrier for rural residents. Simply put, there is a lack of public transportation or other affordable and reliable transportation options serving rural communities. Residents often live long distances from neighbours and from municipal centres wherein so many social and health support offices are located. Lack of access to transportation is particularly acute for people living on low or fixed incomes. One of FCSS’s important preventive roles is guarding against isolation and increasing social connection. If people are unable to travel to programming, FCSS’s capacity to reach people is limited.

Transportation is also an issue for more acute social and personal needs, such as attending medical appointments or appointments with other social service agencies, either locally or in the city. FCSS programs are generally prohibited from using designated governmental funding to offer transportation service. At least one director told the research team that their FCSS provides a transportation service that they pay for with non-FCSS funding because reducing barriers to participation is a core FCSS goal. Directors also emphasized the need to provide outreach services and to meet people where they live in cases where an individual is housebound or unable to travel.

Another infrastructure issue rural FCSS directors raised concerned lack of available, appropriate, and affordable space for programming. Rural communities often have a limited stock of buildings suitable to rent or borrow for events, and building new infrastructure is for the most part prohibitively expensive for FCSS programs with limited budgets.

One final significant piece the research team heard regarding rural FCSS programs’ funding challenges is that some rural communities have experienced population growth or economic development and have increased in importance as regional hubs. While this shift may suggest an important corrective to assumptions of rural decline, the team was told that provincial FCSS funding has not kept pace with, or has not yet recognized, this growth. FCSS programs in these communities now have more clients, but in at least some cases, have had to cut programming to shift resources to “maxed-out” programs.

## Key Challenge 2: The Increasing Inaccessibility of Provincial Social Services in Rural Alberta

It is increasingly difficult for both rural residents and rural FCSS offices to access provincial government support services. This is partly the result of a long-running trend of the centralization of public services that has occurred in Alberta and elsewhere. In general, the story has been the same across Canada for more than three decades: stagnant populations in rural areas, combined with the ever-present search for “efficiencies” among cost-conscious provincial governments has led to a “retreat of the state” from rural areas. As one rural FCSS director noted, to the extent that services still exist in small communities, they are often “a shell of what they used to be.”

Nearly all FCSS directors who took part in this study highlighted the ongoing process of centralization of social services. They noted that, not only did these processes often unfold with little consultation or communication with key community stakeholders (including FCSS offices), this decline of services has significantly impacted rural community members who are dependent on government services but are now being asked to travel much farther at their own expense to a government office or healthcare facility for assistance. This presents a very real barrier for many community members for whom financial insecurity or health concerns make such travel difficult, if not impossible.

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*“For a long time, we have been talking with Alberta Supports and Alberta Works... We have been requesting that they provide a person on a regular basis, like once a month, to come to our office ... and there is an absolute refusal. There was zero interest in them being accessible out here. Their solution was that, if there are clients that need help, they can call their office and book an appointment to meet with those clients. But it still required a person to travel that 45 plus minutes.”*

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This is not a new observation with respect to the delivery of rural public services. However, what is increasingly evident for FCSS offices across rural Alberta is that, given that they are now very often “the only place in town” that is understood to offer social supports to community members in need, FCSS offices are often shouldered with additional requests for help from residents.

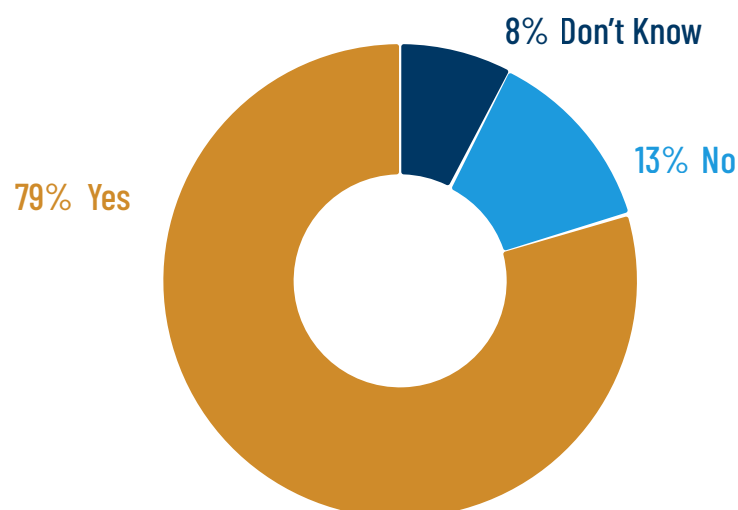
Part of this trend seems to have been by design on the part of the GOA. A significant concern raised frequently by FCSS directors is the ongoing “downloading” of additional responsibilities that were once within the purview of other provincial agencies onto FCSS offices, often without additional financial support or meaningful training. One FCSS director recounted a time wherein a designated provincial support worker would routinely visit the office to help local seniors with applications required to access certain supports or benefits. That worker eventually stopped coming and instead, “Our office got a PowerPoint and my staff are expected to go out and share the information on their services and benefits to the community.”

This may seem like an insignificant anecdote, but the research team heard a version of this story repeatedly during the study. The consistent downloading of tasks is further stressing FCSS programs across rural communities by increasing their workload without access to additional provincial funding.

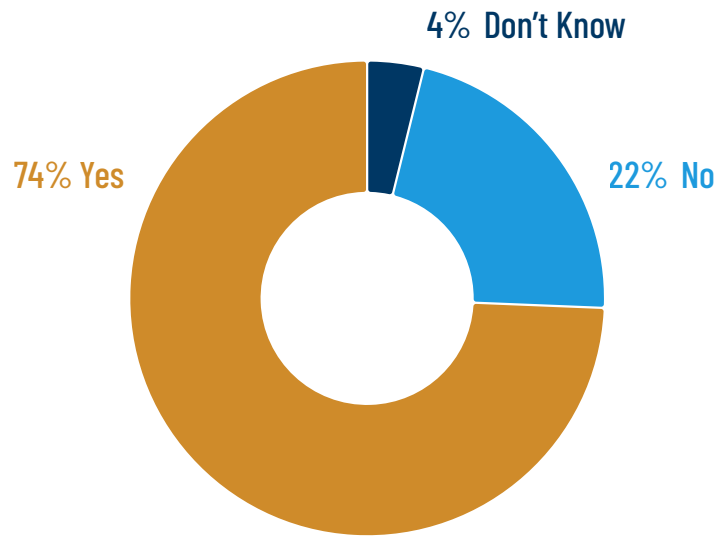
A related outcome of centralization of support services is, even if rural FCSS programs are not technically being asked to “take on” additional responsibilities, because they are often “the only place in town” offering any type of supports, community members requiring help will frequently show up at FCSS offices with requests for assistance. However, such requests are often beyond the FCSS’s legislated mandate of providing preventative services and thus, technically, meant to be addressed by other agencies who, in many cases, no longer have a physical presence in the community.

As Figure 10, page 25 and Figure 11, page 26 show, the overwhelming majority of rural FCSS directors are being forced to extend their mandate and completing additional work beyond what they are funded to do. Importantly, there is a strong sense that these requirements have significantly increased since 2018 (Figure 12, page 26).

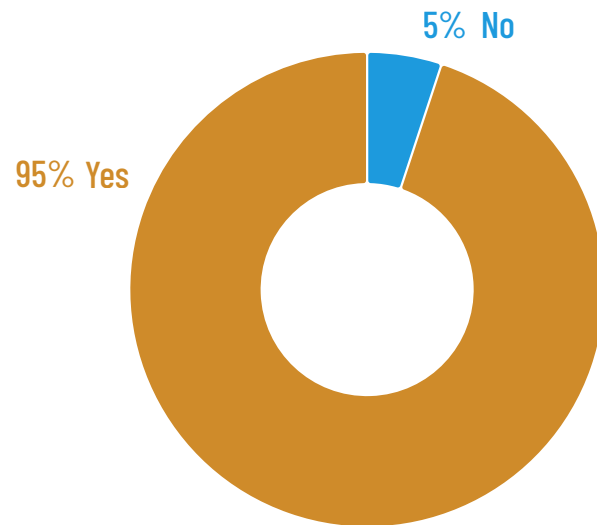
**Figure 10: Do you feel your FCSS program is having to take on responsibilities that are meant to be the mandate of other provincial ministries or agencies?**



**Figure 11: Does your FCSS program occasionally provide services to community members beyond those you understand to fall under the mandate of “prevention”?**



**Figure 12: Has this pressure to provide services beyond “prevention” increased since 2018?**



### **The Relational Realities of Rural Life**

Pressure for FCSS offices to complete work beyond their mandate is amplified by the “relational reality” of small-town life. Compared to urban centres, there is a higher likelihood that members of a rural FCSS office have some personal connection or familiarity to the community member in need and thus feel an additional responsibility to help, even when the request is well outside FCSS’s mandate. Even if this relational component is not part of the equation in a given request for help from a community member, the fact that rural FCSS offices are more likely to provide direct services compared to urban FCSS offices (who are more likely to “grant-out” their funding to other organizations), make them more prone to being approached for this kind of help.

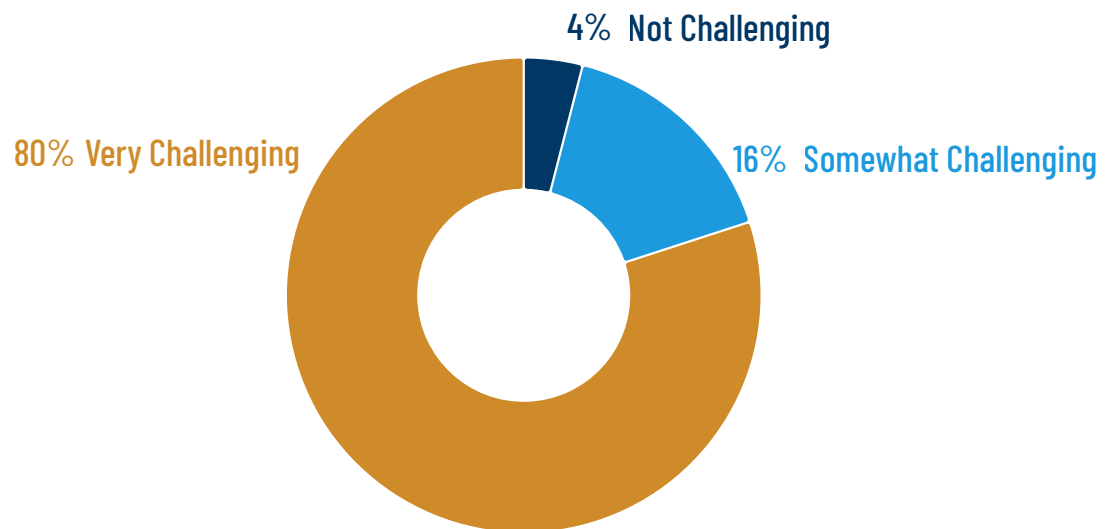
In either case, that rural FCSS offices have essentially become one of the last physical places (if not the only place) where people in need of social services can seek help, they are automatically placed in the unfair and untenable situation of having to go beyond their

mandate and provide intervention-type services (incurring the extra cost and effort this entails with no hope of being reimbursed) or turning away a community member in need, who may be someone they know personally, or at least someone they have a high likelihood of encountering again.

### The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Shuttering of Additional In-person Support Services

This reality of rural FCSS offices as the only local site of social supports has intensified in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent decision by the GOA to shutter or reduce in-person services across several social service agencies (conversely, almost all rural FCSS offices remained open throughout the pandemic). Alberta Supports was the service most frequently mentioned in this context by FCSS directors, but it certainly is not the only example of social services offices closing. In place of provincial in-person services, those in need of assistance on a range of issues, such as mental health supports, victim services, senior supports, and AISH applications are increasingly required to call a “1-800” line or seek assistance via an online web platform or email. Every FCSS director interviewed for this study highlighted the negative impact of this change on their operational capacity. FCSS directors were asked about the severity of this challenge (Figure 13, page 27) and roughly 80% of respondents rated this as “very challenging.”

**Figure 13: How challenging have increased community member requests due to the centralization of provincial services like Alberta Supports, Mental Health and Addictions, and Children’s Services, been for your FCSS program?<sup>12</sup>**

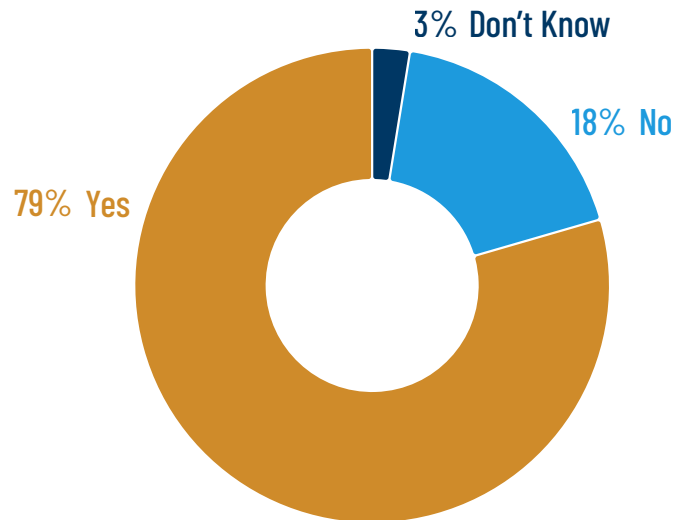


Online and telephone services have severe limitations for vulnerable people in rural communities. Several FCSS directors noted how difficult it can be for community members in need to navigate this new impersonal system. Stories of community members being left on hold for hours on end, of running out of minutes on their “pay as you go” cell phone plans while waiting for help, of attempting to navigate confusing web portals with poor internet service, and of seniors without email addresses being asked to “sign-in online” were very

<sup>12</sup> For readability purposes, this data was collapsed from a survey question that employed a 10-point Likert Scale asking respondents to rate “how challenging” this was from 1 (not challenging) to 10 (extremely challenging). In this chart, scores from 1 – 3 were collapsed into “not challenging”, scores 4 – 6 were collapsed into “somewhat challenging” and scores 7 – 10 were collapsed into “very challenging”.

common. For rural FCSS offices, this has led to a significant influx in community members seeking help. As noted in Figure 14, page 28, this has resulted in an increase in the amount of time FCSS staff must spend one-on-one with community members — time that is now no longer available for traditional preventative programming that is central to FCSS’s mandate.

**Figure 14: Are your FCSS staff spending more time working with community members one-on-one since 2018?**



This new reality is captured well in this extended quote from a long-time rural FCSS director:

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*“The lack of foresight when it comes to centralization of services, the 1-800 numbers, the online portals; these do not work for all people in our community, particularly those that are illiterate, that don’t have telephones, and that don’t have computer skills. And my growing concern is that we are skewing statistics to look like rural communities do not need services because they’re not able to access them.*

*When you look at seniors’ programs, seniors’ benefits, when you look at income support, when you look at even victim services, mental health services, continuing care, all of that has become a ‘1-800’ intake. So you take somebody who has mental health concerns, they’re on the line waiting for sometimes two, three hours, only to be cut off. And still not get to an actual appointment.*

*This is something that my staff experience on a daily basis with folks. Some days, we have five, six people in need come who come in here at their wit’s end, they have no money, no phone, no internet access, no ID, and we are the only ones that try to maneuver through the system with them.*

*And this is what’s happening in all of our rural communities. And we need a voice to say ‘no, this isn’t working.’ And my fear is that the provincial government is swinging the pendulum to a fully centralized intake system because it’s saving money, it’s efficient...*

*These things pull us away from what the true mandate of FCSS is. And so it does cause a lot of stress on the staff, a lot of burnout, and a lot of feelings of helplessness, almost because there’s nothing they can do.*

*And I would say everybody in (our office) has thought about walking away. But their sense of responsibility won’t let them because they’re also the ones that look people in the eye, as opposed to the person on the other end of a ‘1-800’ call.”*

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## Negative Impacts on Rural Clients

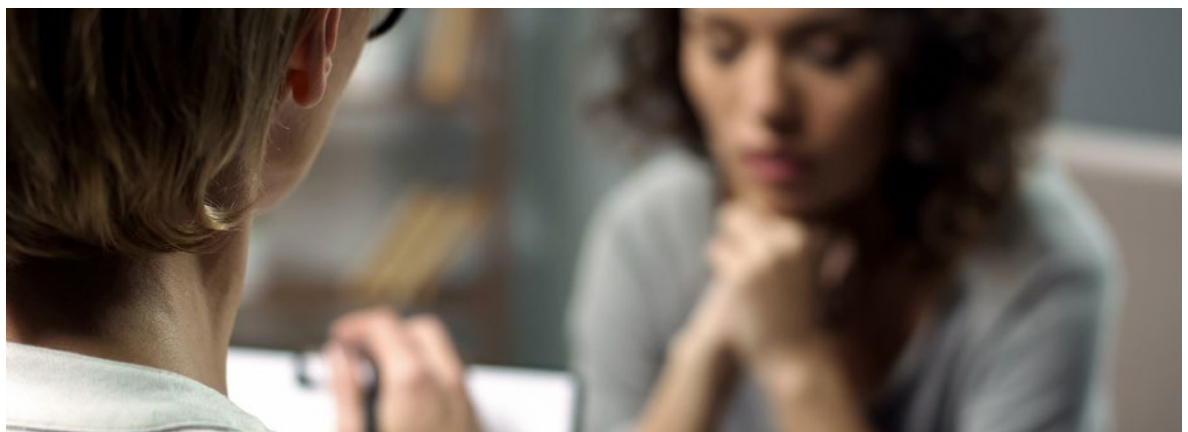
Unsurprisingly, not only has the recent move towards “1-800” lines and online platforms stressed rural FCSS offices, these changes have also resulted in noticeable negative impacts on rural citizens in need. Several rural FCSS directors spoke passionately about the reality of more vulnerable community members simply “falling through the cracks” and not receiving the help they require, and are entitled to, because the system has become far too inaccessible. Several FCSS directors recounted stories of people simply “giving up” and not pursuing the help they need. As the quote above suggests, there are legitimate fears that the true volume of “need” in rural communities is much more significant than what appears in provincial statistics because so many rural citizens either fail to navigate the new virtual reality of provincial supports or they have stopped trying. This was precisely the moral of one of the more dramatic (although not unique) stories shared with the research team:

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*“We had an individual that was threatening to commit suicide, or even take other people out because he was so frustrated with trying to navigate the provincial social services system. And so we did a bit of an intervention with him, and we were able to develop some supports that we could offer to him and support him, and help navigating some of those services. But I mean it, it was so bad that he was very serious about taking his own life. So, that’s just one example of where what happens when you have people that are already in challenging situations, and they just are getting the runaround from agencies and governments, and when there aren’t really clear lines about who is supposed to be doing what. I know there’s a lot of discussion in the FCSS world around the centralization of Alberta Supports. And I feel like we haven’t received as many clients requesting this type of help recently, and it’s mostly because people have given up.”*

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Even in cases where individuals are able to connect with support workers online or over the phone, many FCSS directors noted that such impersonal “virtual intakes” frequently fail to uncover the full range of services vulnerable people need. The result is “the loss of a continuum of service” wherein the social support system can “wrap around the entire client” and ensure they are both properly taken care of and receive the full multitude of supports they need. Further, clients no longer have a consistent contact person to follow up in this environment, leading to additional challenges accessing the required supports. Ultimately, as one rural FCSS director explained, “The actions of the provincial government [in transitioning to ‘1-800’ lines or online web portals for intakes and assistance] ... summarily dismissed people who are already disenfranchised.”



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In summary, the ongoing centralization of social services in Alberta has generated significant challenges for rural FCSS programs and rural citizens — challenges that have only multiplied with the recent decision to fast-track a transition to telephone intake lines and online web portals for a variety of provincial social service supports (especially Alberta Supports) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because rural FCSS offices are often “the only shop in town,” they face a disproportionate burden compared to most of their urban counterparts. Indeed, this issue raises a serious equity concern. Multiple provincial agencies mandated to deliver supports to all Alberta citizens have increasingly reduced their in-person supports to rural Albertans. Rural FCSS offices are subsequently faced with helping vulnerable community members navigate this new system — a considerable task for offices already facing funding and capacity pressures. This in turn intensifies pressure on rural municipalities to increase funding to local FCSS programs, which has resulted in a significant increase in municipal overcontribution to FCSS programs across rural Alberta.

### **Key Challenge 3: Changing and Increasing Social Needs in Rural Communities**

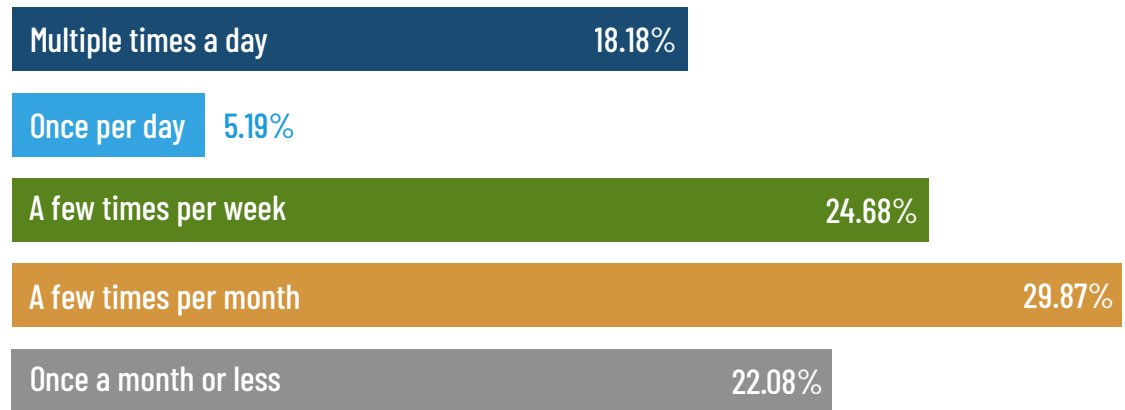
Rural FCSS directors were essentially unanimous in highlighting the changing nature and the overall increase of social service needs in their communities — two trends that have also placed new stresses on already taxed FCSS programs in rural Alberta. Although tracing precise causes of such complex trends is difficult, the FCSS directors we spoke with were adamant that both the COVID-19 pandemic and recent inflation are key drivers of changing and increasing client needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unique and difficult challenges for all Albertans. Rural FCSS directors spoke at length about a clear decline in the mental health of many of their clients, of the impacts of social isolation (especially for children and seniors), and increased anxiety related to both physical health and financial wellbeing. In addition, directors noticed new patterns of division within communities, decreased comfort levels in group settings, and declining levels of healthy behaviours in the wake of basically losing two years of FCSS group programming.

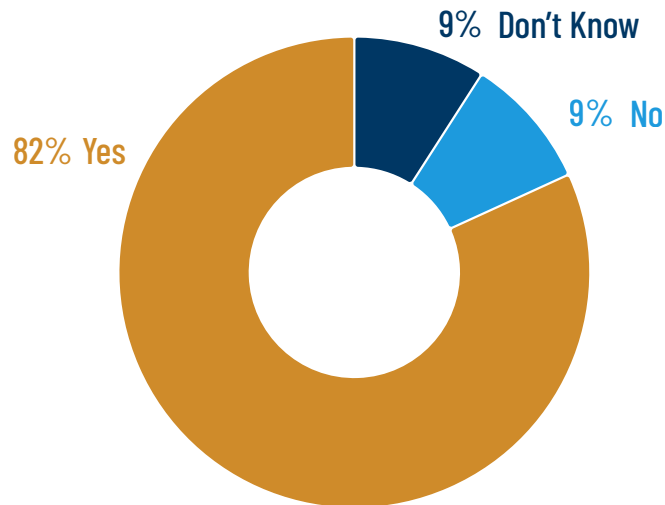
The current period of inflation has added more stress on many of the most vulnerable in our communities. Multiple FCSS directors spoke of “unprecedented demand” for the services of local food banks, of noticing more and more people “not eating,” and of a more general decline in the mental health of many given the overarching anxiety fast-rising prices of all key staples can cause in those populations without the means to absorb significantly higher costs. Several rural FCSS directors also noted increasing levels of homelessness in their communities, a trend that was already emerging prior to the pandemic, and has grown worse in the past few years.

Overall, rural FCSS directors are receiving more requests for assistance than previous years and are encountering more complex cases involving serious mental health issues, addictions, domestic abuse, crime, and individuals and families in serious financial distress. In short, the number of people who are walking through the doors of rural FCSS offices in crisis has increased dramatically in the past few years (See Figure 15, page 31 and Figure 16, page 31).

**Figure 15: How often do your FCSS staff encounter community members who are in a state of crisis?**

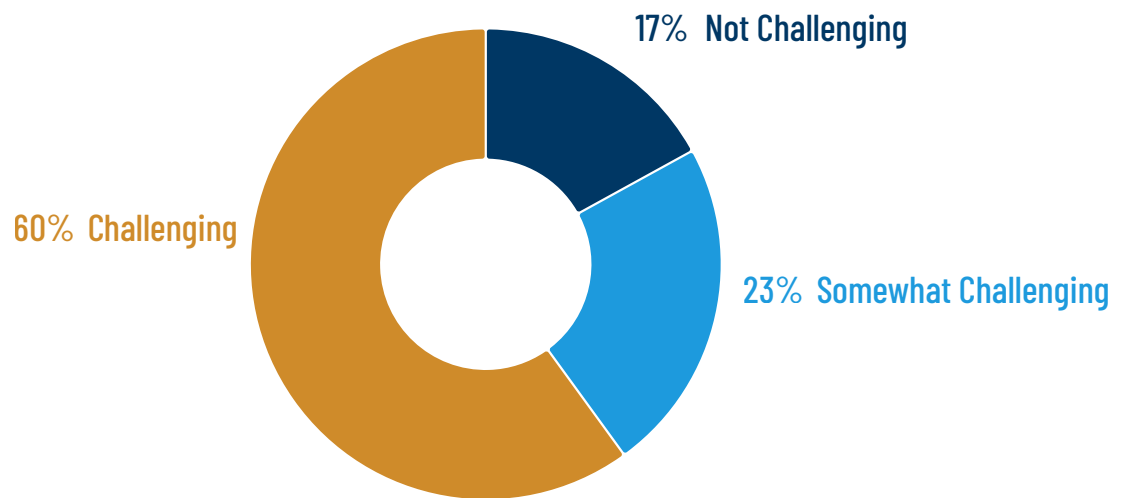


**Figure 16: Have your FCSS staff experienced an increase in community members who are in a state of crisis since 2018?**



These trends are especially problematic for rural FCSS offices because such cases clearly fall within the range of “intervention” rather than “prevention,” thus often pushing FCSS staff further beyond their legislated mandate. As discussed earlier, the “relational realities” of rural life make it especially difficult for rural FCSS staff to simply turn people in need of intervention away. Indeed, one clear outcome of this increased pressure that several rural FCSS directors noted was a noticeable rise in both workload and levels of personal stress among both FCSS staff and members of community organizations who partner with FCSS on local programming, often leading to what many respondents labelled as “staff burnout” (see Figure 17, page 32).

**Figure 17: How challenging has the problem of staff burnout been in your FCSS office?<sup>13</sup>**

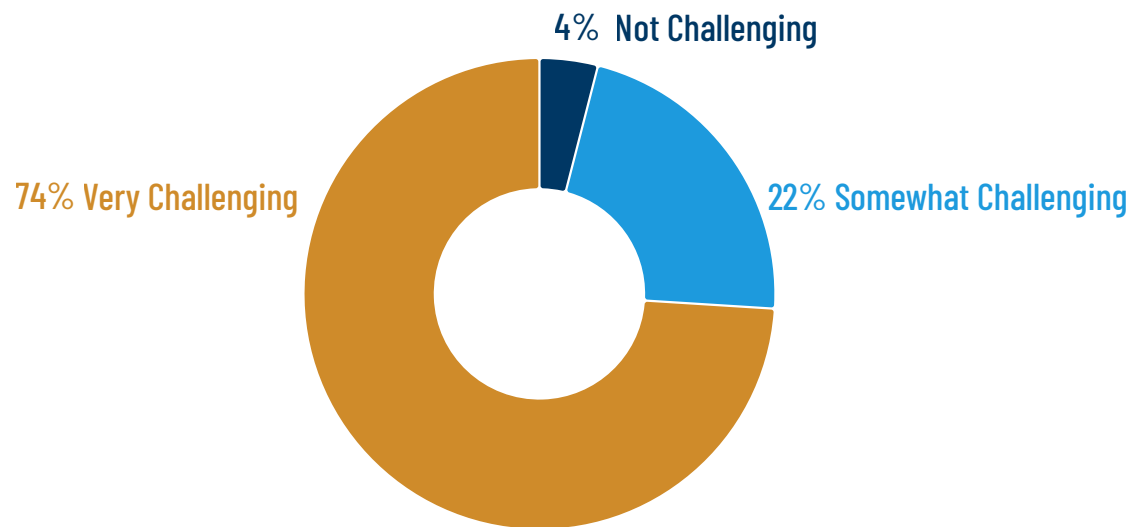


FCSS directors have faced increasing anxiety related to both the wellbeing of their staff and clientele, but also awareness that these patterns place even more fiscal pressure on their underfunded offices. In addition, many directors demonstrated a fair amount of despair in their conversations with us in response to their growing sense that provincial officials are simply unconvinced by their pleas regarding the increasingly dire situation facing both vulnerable individuals and rural FCSS offices.

Granted, the changing nature and increasing frequency of these social service needs are not localized to rural communities. It is likely that most urban social service providers across Alberta (if not North America and beyond) have noted similar patterns in the wake of the pandemic and the subsequent period of inflation. However, due to existing funding shortfalls and increasing client loads, these new challenges are pushing already taxed rural FCSS offices to the brink. FCSS directors were asked about the severity of this challenge (Figure 18, page 33) and roughly 74% of respondents deemed this to be “very challenging.”

**13** For readability purposes, this data was collapsed from a survey question that employed a 10-point Likert Scale asking respondents to rate “how challenging” this was from 1 (not challenging) to 10 (extremely challenging). In this chart, scores from 1 – 3 were collapsed into “not challenging”, scores 4 – 6 were collapsed into “somewhat challenging” and scores 7 – 10 were collapsed into “very challenging”.

**Figure 18: How challenging has increased demand for intervention-type services due to recent challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic or cost-of-living inflation to your FCSS program?<sup>14</sup>**



## Policy Recommendations

### 1. Increase Core Funding from the Province

The most commonly mentioned policy recommendation made by rural FCSS directors who participated in this study was simple: the provincial government must increase core funding for FCSS programs across the province. As mentioned earlier, provincial funding for FCSS programming remained capped at \$100 million from 2015 – 2022. In the meantime, several standard FCSS costs, from staff salaries to space rental to materials required for various on-the-ground programming have risen considerably. In this environment, many municipalities across rural Alberta have been forced to increase funding beyond their required 20% to prop up FCSS programs in their communities. Even with municipal overcontributions, the research team repeatedly heard about FCSS programs across rural Alberta facing significant fiscal pressure, often being forced to curtail programming, make smaller contributions to partnering community organizations, and reduce staff hours. Although the province increased overall funding to FCSS programs across the province by \$5 million in 2023, it is a near certainty that this amount will not be enough to address the key fiscal issues rural FCSS offices are facing.

A number of different ideas for ensuring more funds flow to rural FCSS offices were shared over the course of this study but, at minimum, it would be prudent for the provincial ministry to ensure annual increases in core funding are indexed to inflation. Given the emerging patterns of need discussed in the previous section, and the significant pressures the centralization of other social services puts on rural FCSS offices, there is an urgent need not only for funding to index with inflation but to increase significantly overall. Therefore, a significant increase to core funding that acknowledges the rising

<sup>14</sup> For readability purposes, this data was collapsed from a survey question that employed a 10-point Likert Scale asking respondents to rate “how challenging” this was from 1 (not challenging) to 10 (extremely challenging). In this chart, scores from 1 – 3 were collapsed into “not challenging”, scores 4 – 6 were collapsed into “somewhat challenging” and scores 7 – 10 were collapsed into “very challenging”.



need for the types of vital services and programs FCSS offices provide to their community members is also recommended. Widespread municipal overcontribution essentially means that the provincial government is failing to uphold the funding parameters that govern FCSS operations in Alberta: 80% from the province and 20% from the municipality. A meaningful increase to core funding would help to return the provincial-municipal funding balance to what is demanded by the terms of the FCSS Regulation. In an environment wherein the provincial government is basking in significant budget surpluses and has made several large spending announcements across different jurisdictions in the past year, a serious increase to the core funding of FCSS programs in Alberta seems imminently doable.

In addition, the provincial government must do more to ensure the sustainability of core funding for FCSS programming. Several FCSS directors noted that the current practice of signing three-year funding contracts with individual FCSS programs creates an unnecessary level of anxiety, and even program inertia, for directors and staff, especially when these contracts are frequently renewed at “the very last moment.” Similar concerns were shared in relation to “pilot programs” the provincial government decides to fund. These should be funded for at least three (if not five) years, and should not be abruptly ended without significant consultation with FCSS directors. The degree of precarity faced by FCSS offices on both these fronts adds additional stress to programs that are already “maxed out”.

## **2. Increase the Accessibility of Provincial Social Support Services for Rural Albertans**

In accordance with the second key challenge discussed above, the GOA must do more to ensure certain provincial social services remain or are returned to rural communities. No rural FCSS director we spoke with expected a full return of social services that once existed in rural Alberta decades ago. However, there are actions the GOA can take to lessen the load rural FCSS offices face in terms of the increased demand from community members given that they are often “the last shop in town” offering some social supports.

At a minimum, the province must revisit the decision to transition so many support services and client intakes to “1-800” lines and online web portals. Not only has this decision placed incredible stress on rural FCSS offices, it has also proven to have significantly negative impacts on vulnerable people throughout rural Alberta who find it very difficult, if not impossible, to navigate this new system. Re-opening the Alberta Supports offices that were shuttered over the pandemic would be the most appropriate first step in this direction.

More generally, a serious commitment from the GOA to ensure that more in-person social service supports are made available across a wider cross section of Albertan communities is required. While it is unrealistic to insist that every town and village across Alberta contain a selection of social service offices covering multiple issues, the province must ensure that there are physical offices within reasonable distances to all Alberta communities so rural Albertans can seek assistance in-person. Some additional assistance with transportation costs must also be included in such plans.

In addition, the GOA must reinvest in ensuring that social service workers who possess the capacity to truly help community members in need with various supports they are entitled to are travelling to and spending time in rural Alberta. The slow erosion of this practice has negatively impacted rural FCSS offices and vulnerable rural citizens. The principle of equitable treatment for all Albertans, urban and rural, requires revisiting this model.

### **3. Ensure that Future Public Policy Related to Social Service Delivery in Alberta is Approached via a Rural Lens**

The practice of applying a “rural lens” to public policy decisions refers to an assessment that specifically considers how a proposed policy change will impact rural regions and peoples. To apply a “rural lens” to public policy decisions related to social service delivery in Alberta would require a careful and systematic consideration of the impact that any policy change in this area would have on rural Albertan communities and citizens.



Having outlined the challenges rural FCSS programs face, many recent decisions related to social service delivery in Alberta were not considered through a “rural lens.” Although FCSS programs across Alberta are facing increasing pressures in response to similar challenges, impacts are often felt most acutely by rural FCSS programs that bear most of the burden generated by the ongoing centralization of broader social service delivery. On a more technical note, the transition to the use of telephone and web portals by many social service agencies discounts the reality of both poor internet and spotty cellular service in rural regions. Although the past cannot be altered, future policy decisions related to provincial social services must more seriously engage with questions related to impacts on rural communities and citizens.

Throughout this study the team heard many ways in which ministries responsible for social service delivery could better anticipate the impacts of policy changes on rural Alberta. Several rural FCSS directors noted the current funding calculation that determines the provincial contribution to each FCSS program should take into account that the size and sparseness of rural communities leads to higher costs for offering different FCSS programs, and of sharing important information with community members. Similarly, although some consolidation and centralization of social services may be inevitable, rural FCSS directors insisted that, when relocating services, more must be done to understand the actual travel patterns that rural residents follow, rather than assuming that travelling to a location pre-determined by an Edmonton-based bureaucrat will be realistic for rural citizens from a specific community.

Several directors (although not all) were open to being more creative (and even somewhat radical) in terms of what rural FCSS programs can and should accomplish, given the realities they face. Rural FCSS offices are consistently “doing more with less” given the centralization of social service supports and the increasingly complex social challenges many rural Albertans are now facing. In such circumstances, more and more rural FCSS directors are asking whether they should take on an enlarged mandate capable of providing traditional “preventative” programming and additional “intervention-type” services and supports to community members in crisis given that no

local alternatives exist. Any such move in this direction would require careful planning, consultation, and enhanced resources from the GOA. Such an idea was not unanimously supported by the FCSS directors we spoke with. However, to even discuss it in a way that considers the impacts such a move would have on rural FCSS programs and community members is an example of applying a “rural lens” to an important debate about a large change in policy direction in rural Alberta. Evidence suggests that the time is now to have these conversations to ensure that social service delivery truly works for rural Albertans. The team heard too many examples that speak to the ways it currently does not.

#### **4. Ensure that Social Service Policy in Alberta is Designed with Meaningful Contributions from Rural FCSS Programs**

Building upon the previous point, “applying a rural lens” to policy discussions amounts to more than a study conducted from afar by urban-based policy makers. To apply a rural lens is to meaningfully engage, consult, and listen to the true “experts” in this field: the directors and staff in rural FCSS offices who are living the realities described in this report. Most recent social service-related policy decisions have been made without this type of engagement — a process that goes some way towards understanding how Alberta has ended up in this situation. In fairness, recent work around the creation of a new FCSS Accountability Framework engaged a wide cross section of rural FCSS directors, and one of the goals of the process was to better plot ways to improve coordination with social service agencies located in other ministries. But more must be done by the GOA to intentionally engage rural FCSS offices when making broader social service delivery decisions that will inevitably impact rural communities and, of course, the rural FCSS programs that are actually in the community and will be tasked, formally or informally, with dealing with the on-the-ground consequences.





## \* CONCLUSION

FCSS is a crucial service in towns, villages, and rural communities across Alberta. Relying on the efforts of dedicated staff and supported by municipal decision-makers, FCSS offices in every corner of the province support strong families, connected seniors, and healthy children. In other words, FCSS is a massive part of what makes Alberta's rural communities great.

This report shows that the efforts and passion of FCSS leaders in doing whatever it takes to support everyone in their communities, even the most vulnerable, has been compromised by systematic provincial downloading of responsibility and underfunding of FCSS services. FCSS services are doing more than ever before without the requisite training, funding, and capacity support. This situation leads to unfair pressure on municipalities, unreasonable expectations on FCSS staff, and additional stress to vulnerable rural Albertans.

The RMA will continue to advocate to government for proper funding of FCSS services, and adequate local availability of social services that are the responsibility of the province to deliver. This report tells an indisputable story: FCSS offices are going above and beyond to soften the local impacts of provincial underfunding and service level reductions.



# CAO REPORT

September 25th, 2023

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The following report provides Council with an update on the activities and projects of the Town. The report does not provide an all-encompassing review of Town activities, but does provide Council with a brief update on some of the more noteworthy activities and events.

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- Work is ongoing with the Development by Design project – a two-part project involving ASP in the NW of town and broadband capacity surveys for the business sector. Business surveys are up to 50% the next steps are to analyze the survey data and then have Tango Networks (project consultant) present results to Council.
- Work is also ongoing with the Sustainable Housing Initiative, who are reviewing town development policies, and engaging with landowners and developers in town. The purpose of the project is to provide options to enable housing choice in Claresholm. Administration has reviewed their draft recommendations, and there will be a report to council in the coming meetings.
- Attended at professional development training session – Effective Writing to Inform Council. Expect some minor changes and tweaks to our RFD/Info Brief Templates, and hopefully improved readability of council documents and agenda.
- Collaborated with Alberta Transportation in August to monitor speeds at the north and south ends of Town on Highway 2. Town staff are awaiting the results of the data collection and recommendations from Alberta Transportation.
- The Town received the community hall assessment over the summer. Recall that the Community Hall board requested this assessment to assist with maintenance planning. The board intends to review the recommendations and findings and then to discuss with Council in the future.
- Ongoing meetings with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas to discuss and monitor ongoing water shortages in Pine Coulee reservoir. The town's engineer has been involved in these conversations as well. Water supply is low but stable, and should remain that way throughout the winter and into spring. We have discussed future updates to the Water Shortage Response Plan (for greater clarity on some of the restrictions and guidelines) and how to manage the town's water amidst ongoing restrictions.

## BYLAW

See enclosed report

# CORPORATE SERVICES

See enclosed report

# DEVELOPMENT

See enclosed report

# FCSS

See enclosed report

# FIRE

See enclosed report

# INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

See enclosed report

# RECREATION

See enclosed report

# UTILITY SERVICES

See enclosed report

Respectfully submitted by

Abe Tinney  
CAO



# INFORMATION BRIEF

Meeting: Sept 25, 2023  
Agenda Item: CAO REPORT

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## BYLAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT June 22, 2023/Sept 22, 2023

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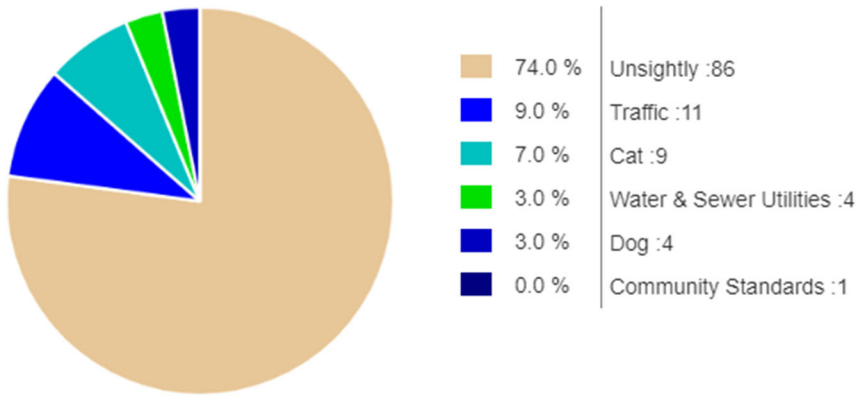
### Report Mapping



### Jun/Sept Highlights:

1. Bylaw is now in daily contact with Foothills Dispatch which increases Officer safety.
2. 13 Animals brought into CARES
  - 4 Dogs
  - 9 Cats
3. Unsightly Properties on the increase with the season change.
4. Bylaw Office started 115 files between Jun 22, 2023-Sept22, 2023.
5. With the warm temperature's calls are down.
6. Radar signs deployed at the North and South ends of Town, weekly readings sent to CAO
7. 4 warnings issued for the Stage 3 Water Restrictions

Total number of requests by Service Type :



	Opened	Closed
Unightly	13	73
Traffic	0	11
Cat	0	9
Water & Sewer Utilities	0	4
Dog	0	4
Community Standards	1	0

## DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES - UPDATE



*For: 6/26/2023 - 9/22/2023*

### Claresholm

#### Financial

- Questica, budgeting and financial reporting software onboarding and configuration has been a significant focus over the last couple months. There have been a number of hiccups and delays to getting this fully rolled out, but continuing to make progress. Questica will be used for the 2024 budgeting process this fall/winter.
- June & July month ends were completed with corresponding Council Financial Statements included on the Aug 14<sup>th</sup> and September 11<sup>th</sup> Council agendas respectively
- 2024 Budgeting prep has begun, and our first budgeting meetings with the Audit and Finance Committee should be in late October.
- Preparing interim reporting for Active Transportation grant for Amundsen Park and working on a scope change for the same.
- ATCO Gas Franchise Fee increase was drafted and presented to Council. After passing, coordinating with ATCO to complete required notifications and paperwork.

#### General

- Preparing and arranging for transition of our Utilities & AR Clerk, an employee of over 30 years, to reduce hours to part time.
  - This will involve her giving up cemetery responsibilities (transition to HR and Tax Administrator) as well as AR responsibilities as well as, and less front counter/phone responsibilities (transition to Development Assistant).
  - This will involve the Development Assistant transitioning to a full-time position, maintaining the same amount of FTE positions.
- There have been a number of other HR matters that have occurred over the summer that have demanded a fairly significant amount of time.
- Completed the set of management group training sessions with the management team using the 16Personalities platform.
- Completing final DRAFT of the new garbage bylaw (Solid Waste Management) for review/input for the Audit and Finance Committee which should be presented in a meeting held the first week of October.
- Been involved in viewing several product demos. These included:
  - A possible Cemetery management/sales systems which would increase operational efficiencies, help with succession/transition of staff, and provide better service and transparency for the public
  - Several options for meeting agenda/minutes software which would increase efficiencies in preparing agenda and minutes and reduce dependence on a single staff member.
  - A couple different Service Request/Management programs to submit, assign, track, and report on any service requests. This would include anything directly from residents (i.e. potholes) to internal (i.e. water shutoff due to non-payment).

Submitted by  
Blair Bullock, CPA, CA  
Director of Corporate Services

# DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORT

*For: 7/20/2023 – 9/20/2023*



### **Development Permits**

- ❖ 19 permit applications received.
- ❖ 6 development permits closed.

### **Compliance Requests**

- ❖ 13 compliance requests received.

### **Miscellaneous**

- ❖ Local Press Ads – Focus on bylaw (dogs in ball diamonds, leashing of dogs, compost area dumping, cleaning/mowing alleys, address signage in alleys, public notices, etc.)
- ❖ August 2 & August 21, 2023 – Development Focus Groups, landowner engagement sessions.
- ❖ Alberta Municipalities Association – webinar, July 18, 2023 - Facility Use agreements, waivers, indemnity clauses, negligence, insurance coverages, etc.
- ❖ Municipal Planning Commission meeting held July 7 & August 25, 2023.
- ❖ August 24, 2023 – Webinar on energy efficiency and savings for municipal building envelopes.
- ❖ September 5, 2023- meetings held with potential investors.
- ❖ Road Closure bylaw completed and project to be registered at land titles for alley closure adjacent to golf course.
- ❖ Community Development Committee meeting – September 14, 2023.

### **On-going projects**

- ❖ Area Structure Plan – North Point ASP- Development by Design, Associated Engineering presented findings on the background studies with the landowner. Development stats, etc. sent to Associated Engineering, initial concept plan circulated.
- ❖ Asset Management – August 2, 2023 – Request management demo - munisight.
- ❖ Amundsen Park project – lots of work completed. Kinsmen grant application successful, final budgeting to utilize the three current grants.
- ❖ Annexation – Draft order reviewed and confirmation sent to the Land & Property Rights Tribunal (LPRT).

*Submitted by  
Tara vanDellen  
Development Services Manager*

## September FCSS Report to Council

- Kim Berreth is fitting in nicely with the FCSS team. She is planning Lunch and Learns and meeting seniors as they come into the office to get assistance. She is also updating the FCSS website in her quiet times.
- I am preparing to host a Palliative Care volunteer training which is presented by Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association in Feb. It will be a full two-day course with a certificate received at the end. Other people are welcome to attend a specific class or two if they have time constraints but will not receive a certificate. I will be talking about it with the Palliative Care Committee.
- Ruth Mueller will be presenting the Bridges Out of Poverty course to our town again. This is such a useful presentation in helping community members to understand poverty and the people that live within it. The date for this presentation will be Saturday November 4 from 10 to 2:30. This would be a valuable presentation for council and town staff to participate in.
- We arranged for the FCSS Directors and a board member from the MD of Willow Creek to get together and meet with our new MLA Chelsae Petrovic. I hosted a light lunch and everyone except Stavelly FCSS Director was able to attend.
- Sent a letter to President of FCSS Association to let him know that the Alberta Supports office in Claresholm was still sending clients to us for help with filing for Income Support. We have been reminded that we are not to use our FCSS dollars to help where there are other government agencies in place.
- Met with two managers of Income Support from the South Region to discuss how we can meet the needs of the clients in Claresholm. When clients are not able to utilize the online system and require help it appears that they are expecting us to help when they need to access anything to do with Income supports or emergency funding. There did not seem to be an answer to the dilemma of who is to serve the clients of Claresholm. The report by Rural Municipalities and University of Alberta explains this challenge perfectly.
- Starla has met with Denise Rec Manager and Jace to discuss the use of the mezzanine at the arena for the teen centre and junior teens. Starla and I met with Will and John to discuss the changes and to share our vision of the new group moving forward.
- Had a meeting with the Project Evaluator of Safe at Home to give feedback and thoughts for the end of the project. They are trying to obtain some funding to keep this initiative going.
- Made the decision to cancel the Summer Bash that was scheduled for Tues. Aug. 22. It rained the night before, the band cancelled because of rain, the bouncy castle would not be good in the rain and the park would have been too muddy to have activities.

- Starla attended the Mental Health First Aid course and Kim attended one that is specifically geared to seniors. Both of these events were offered for free.
- Have been updating the names that will receive Christmas gifts this year from the Senior Secret Santa Program out of Calgary. So far, we have 50 seniors participating.
- Economic Development (Ali) and FCSS have teamed up to host an in-person presentation on Cross Cultural Awareness, by Rural Immigration within the Rural Development Network. The presenters will be here on Tuesday Oct.17 from 8:30 to 12:30 to host this event.
- Partnered with Housing Authority again this year for our annual bus trip and picnic to Waterton. The bus was full plus we had 2 gentlemen follow behind us. We visited Cameron Lake and found a lovely place to have our picnic. Lots of socializing and connecting of new friends happened throughout the day. The bus driver volunteered his time this year!
- Starla has begun the Finding Balance Series courses at the Social Centre. These classes are about 10 weeks in length and will help to strengthen participants and help with balance.  
We are also able to make more connections with seniors and make them aware of the programs that we have available.
- Interagency is continuing again after a break for the summer.

## TOWN OF CLARESHOLM FIRE DEPARTMENT

### MONTHLY UPDATE

#### FOR THE PERIOD OF: 20-JUNE-2023 TO 19-SEPTEMBER-2023

1. Over the summer months Claresholm Fire responded to 76 events for the dates indicated above. Highlighting these calls include:
  - a. 16 Medical first or co-response
  - b. 12 Outside fires (wildland, grass, field, etc.)
  - c. 10 MVCs
  - d. 3 Vehicle fires
2. There is currently 1 open fire safety codes file
3. The Standard Operating Guidelines that were prepared by the Chief this spring were put into active service on July 1, 2023
4. July saw the introduction of a Fire Advisory for the Town as ordered by the Fire Chief. This advisory will likely remain in place until we have a good ground cover of snow, as there has been negligible precipitation this summer, and drought & water shortage conditions persist
5. August saw the department busy with many events including:
  - a. Hall and truck tours by Kidz-Zone
  - b. Fair days parade, Friday evening Tug – of – War (we'll win next year 😊 ), as well as stand-by for the drift car demo
  - c. Annual fund-raising golf tournament, which brought in over \$12,000 for the membership to put towards the cost of the fire hall renovation and expansion project
  - d. Other public events this month included the Chief overseeing the annual full fire drill at Cottonwood Village. The staff and management are to be commended on their fire emergency and evacuation skills
6. As we rolled into September, we saw the return of children to school, and members of the fire department were on hand at West Meadow Elementary

to welcome both children, parents, and staff back to school and to provide “traffic control / crossing guard” assistance to everyone on their first day.

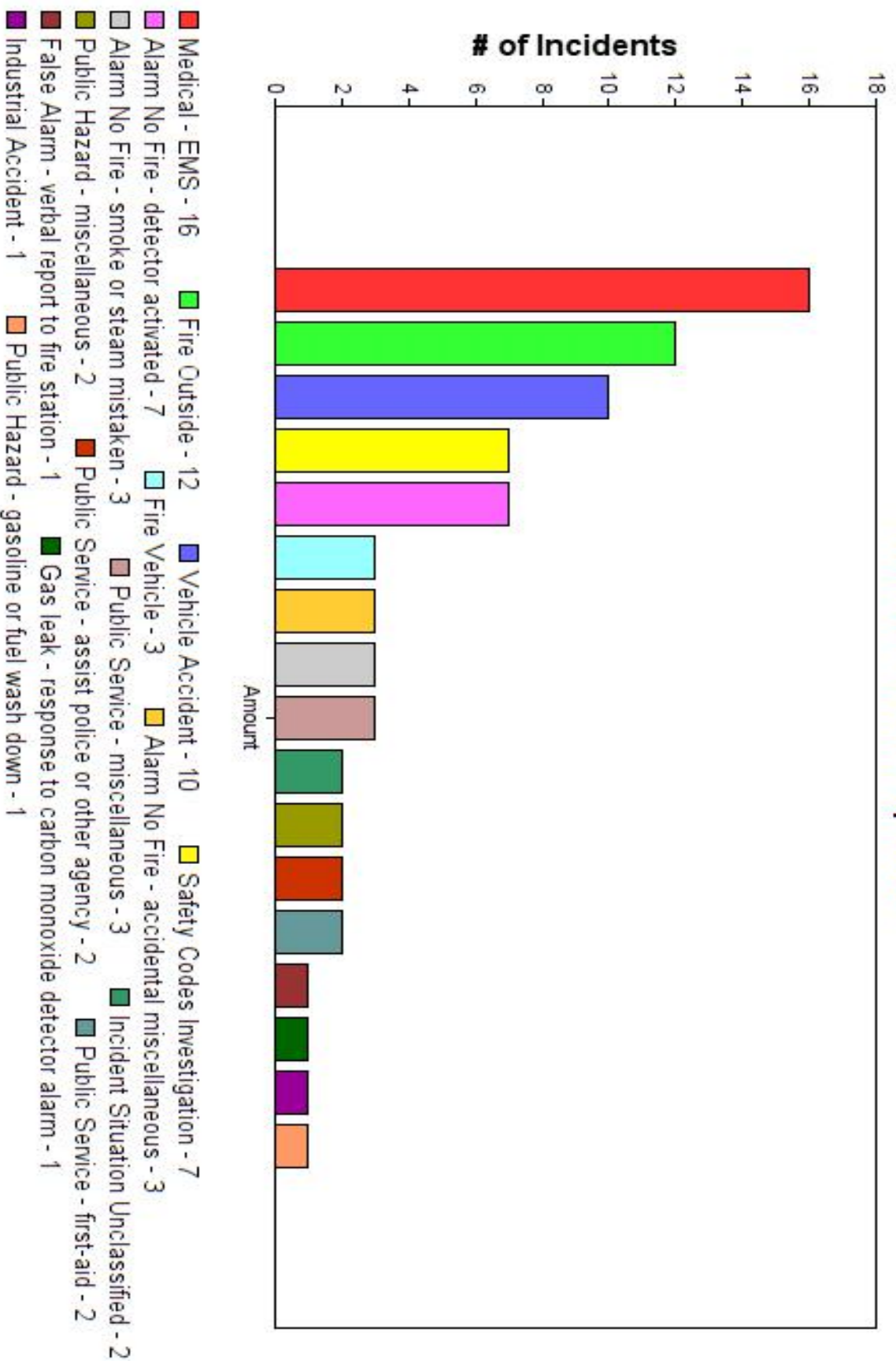
7. The Chief also assisted with the semi-annual maintenance and safety inspections for Claresholm Housing Authority on the 14<sup>th</sup>. This day saw them visit over 20 units, and I’m happy to report there were no major fire safety issues identified – kudos to Maxine & Shane on running such a tight ship
8. August 17<sup>th</sup> saw the annual Terry Fox Run, and as has been the standard for the last number of years, the Claresholm Fire Hall served as the start / stop point for the race. A hearty group of runners, walkers, and bikers (and some with their dogs), left the fire hall after a brief send-off speech from Deputy Mayor Zimmer.
9. Call volume fire-year-to-date (Nov → Oct) is down slightly when compared to 2021-2022. We currently sit at 227 responses when compared with 239 at this date last year; which equates to 95% when compared with last year. Given that both 2020-21 and 2021-22 were record years for the department, the members are ok with a few less calls.
10. Plans for Fire Prevention Week 2023 are well underway, as are plans for a 2-part open house on October 14<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon – stay tuned for details.
11. Attached are the call statistics for this reporting period, as well as drought information and fire danger infographics.

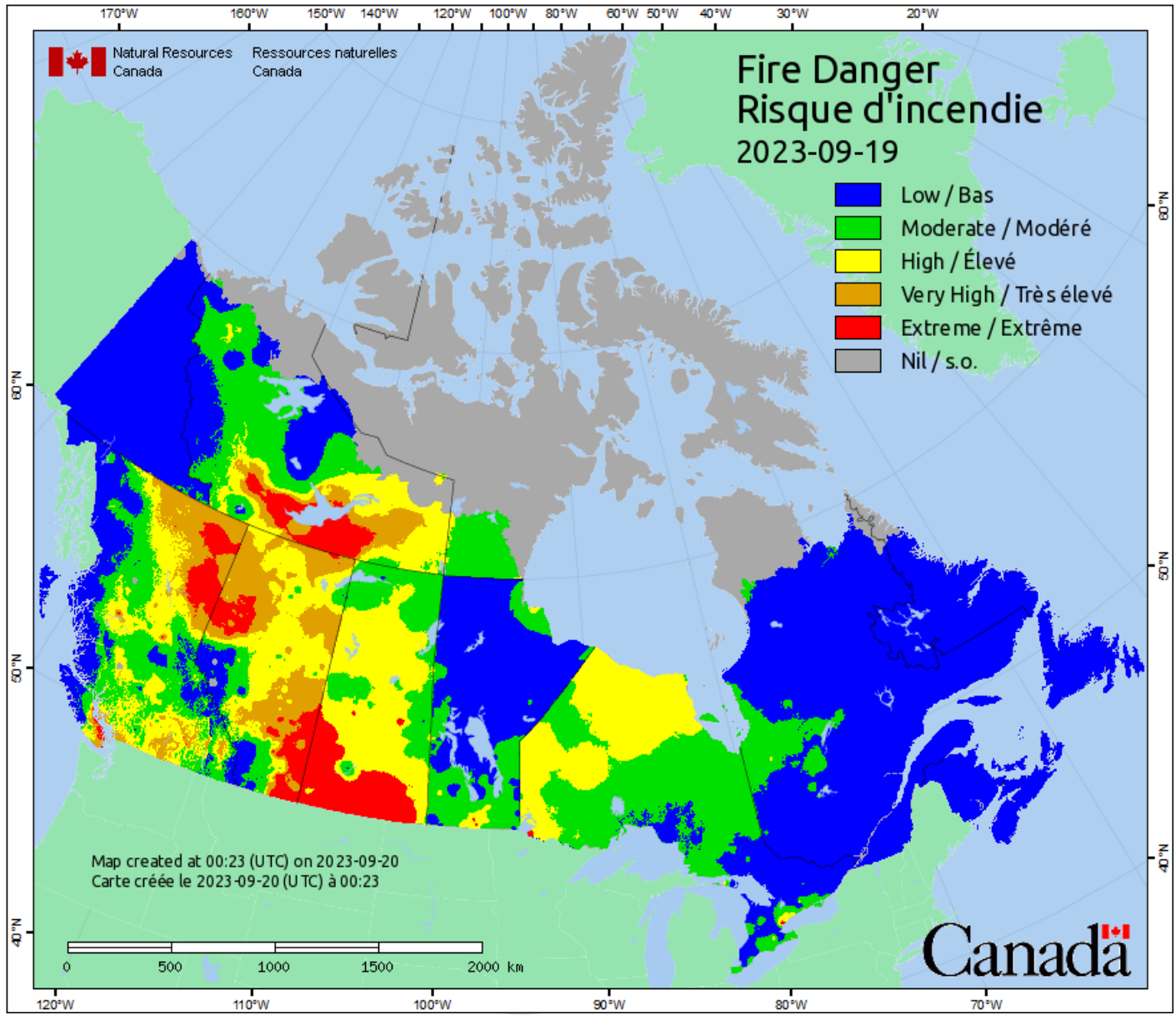
Respectfully submitted,

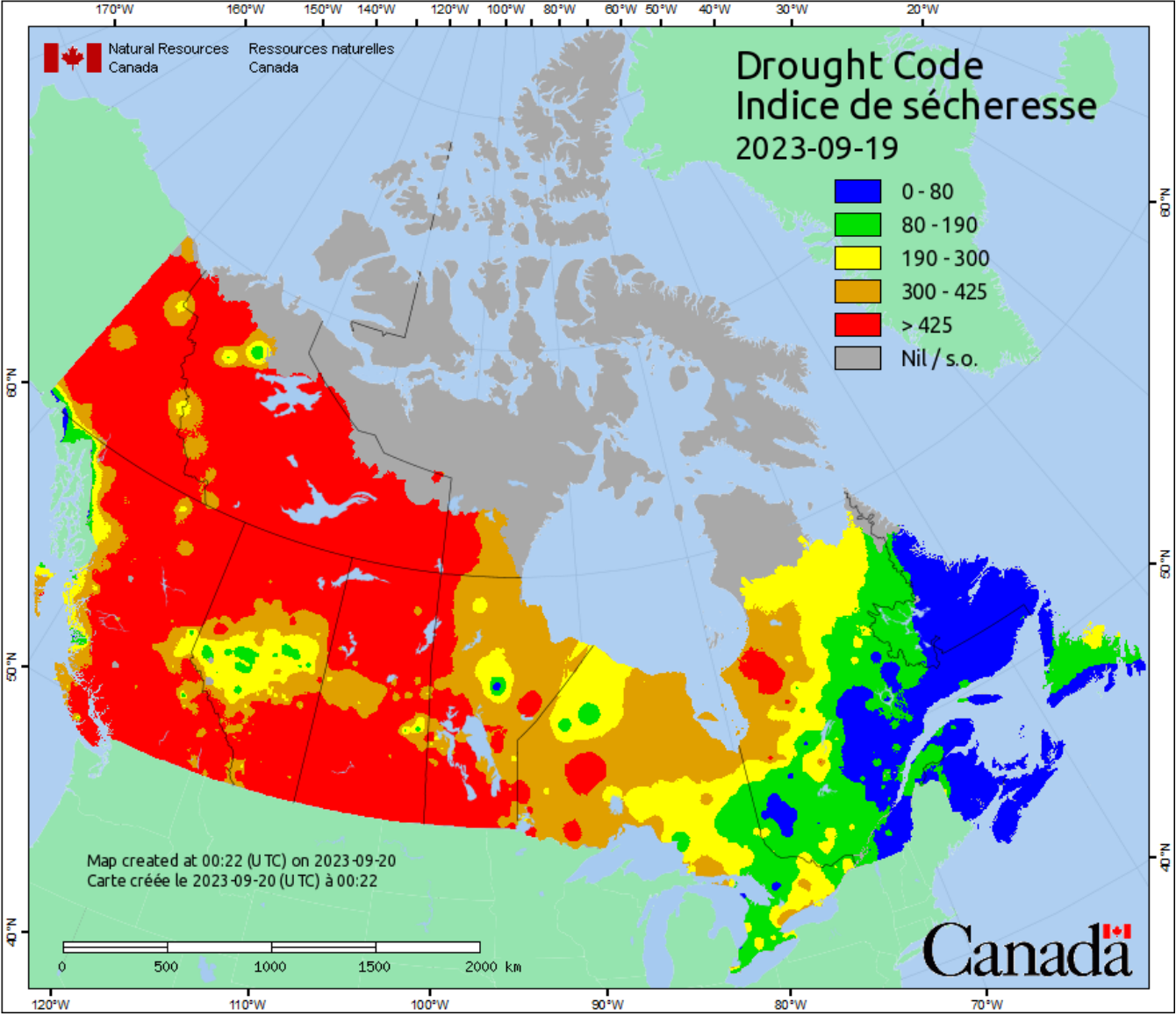
Craig White  
Fire Chief  
Town of Claresholm

## *CFD Call Totals by Type - Summer 2023*

From Jun 20 23 to Sep 19 23









# Infrastructure Services Report



Summer 2023

Jace McLean

Director of Infrastructure

## Arena

The Town crew began making ice September 18, the rink will be open to the public September 25<sup>th</sup> for the season.

## Town Buildings

The regular monthly inspection of Town owned buildings continues.

Administration received the Structural Assessment of the Community Centre and will use it as a guide for future repairs and upgrades.

The bulk water station at the town shop is finished and the users seem to like the coinless operation.



## Equipment

Maintenance and repairs are ongoing. The garbage truck was down for repairs for about 3 weeks while we waited for parts.

## Parks

Upgrades are nearing completion in Amundsen with the pathways and concrete being finished in early August. New irrigation, tree planting, and seeding is still planned for this fall.

The new pavilion at Amundsen hosted Fair Days activities, as well as multiple movies in the park.



## Garbage

The collection program is working as normal.

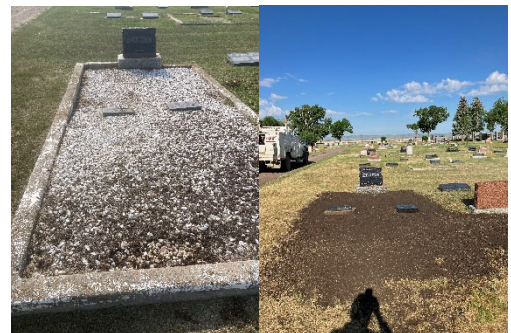
One garbage truck was down for repairs and the backup truck was used full time. Both trucks are now operational.

## Storm Water/Drainage

The Westlynn Storm Trunk project is still on hold. We are waiting for utility relocations. Construction this season is still possible, however unlikely.

## Cemetery

Cemetery maintenance was underway all summer. Multiple family plots were rejuvenated as well as many monuments being straightened. No issues to report.



## Sanitary Sewers

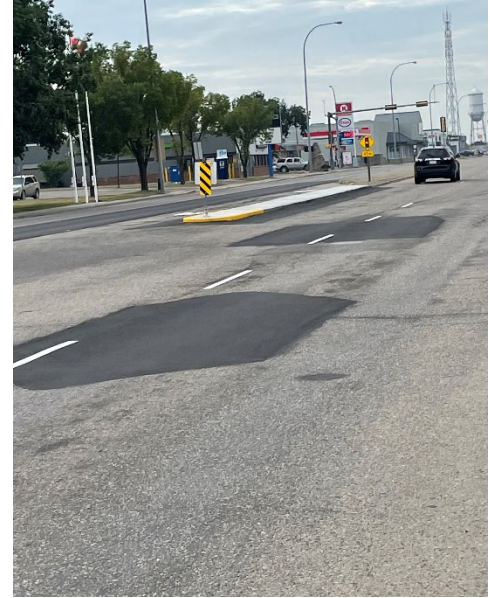
Hwy 2 Sewer Repairs are completed. The job went well, the Town crew was able to do repairs in the manhole at the lights at the same time. The major issues on the sewer main were repaired, although lining the main may still be necessary to avoid future failure.

## Streets

Potholes are being filled as time allows. Patches were repaired all over town and a long term road surface repair plan is being prepared. Deep patching is planned on Sask Cres for this fall with the hopes that we will avoid the yearly frost boils. Surface spray patching has also been utilized around town to stop alligating pavement, results seem promising.

## Sidewalks

The 2023 sidewalk tender has been completed McNally Contractors. Once again our budget ran out long before the sidewalks needing replacement.



## Water Distribution

We experienced two water leaks, both on service lines.

A service line on Westrose Ave developed a small hole. Repairs were done with some issues due to soil conditions.

A new service was pulled into a property on 43<sup>rd</sup> Ave W after experiencing the fourth leak in 10 years.

All irrigation was shut off at all town owned properties early due to the water restrictions. Irrigation lines have been blown out in preparation for winter.



## Recycling

Recycling program is working well.

## Staff

The public works department was understaffed all summer. The seasonal laborer was moved to temporary laborer to assist public works on the garbage truck. We are down one equipment operator at this time, but the crew is working hard to ensure the same level of service.

# CLARESHOLM RECREATION

## July-September

### 2023 Recreation Report



Authored by: Denise Spencer

September 19, 2023



# CLARESHOLM RECREATION

## ARENA

- All bookings for the Claresholm Arena are posted to the calendar located at [claresholm.ca](http://claresholm.ca)
- Claresholm Skating Club has an additional hour of instruction for Fridays from 4-5pm in Addition to their ice slots Monday & Wednesday evenings.
- Pond Hockey will not be in Claresholm this season, they will be booking some ice
- Claresholm Minor Hockey will not be having U13 & U15, they will have U7, U9, 2-U11 and a U18 (5 teams)
- A Ringette league that encompasses Calgary, Okotoks, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat etc. has requested ice
  - Arena Staff have added ringette lines. This will help increase rink capacity
  - We've had numerous requests for Ringette ice in the past years.
- FCSS Teen Center will be starting at the Arena Mezzanine October 2023
- The New Fox Diner will be returning to the Rink for 2023-24
- Roller Disco Night September 9, 2023
  - Calgary Roller Skate hosted
  - Claresholm Rec Partnership with Welcoming Claresholm
  - 141 Waivers Signed
  - Approximately 250 people attended
- Ball Hockey played indoors on Tuesdays from 6:30-8:00pm
  - August 20<sup>th</sup> Tournament was cancelled, original date coincided with Claresholm Fire Department Annual Golf Tournament
- Big Top Magic Circus July 26
  - Returned for 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row

## CAC

- Summer programs were well attended
  - Bronze Medallion and Cross programs did not run
  - LSI and National Lifeguard were well attended with 7 and 6 candidates respectfully
- Staff has been hired for fall, training has commenced for 5 lifeguards
  - This team will be strong, there are a couple who have just turned 16 years who are looking to be in the facility long term.
- Fall programs have filled, due to staffing concerns programming was kept a little lighter than previous years.
- Schools have been contacted and school bookings have commenced for January-June 2024
- Monthly inservices have been planned
- Our 1pm Aquafit for Monday, Wednesday, and Friday continues to be our top adult program with 16 + participants regularly attending

## Tennis Courts-Pickleball

- Outdoor Pickleball finished August 31 at the Tennis courts, started September 7, 2023 at West Meadow Elementary School Monday and Thursday throughout the summer
  - The Volunteer Coordinator has requested a \$1 drop in fee versus the \$2 it was in previous years.

## Dog Park

- This park continues to be a popular area for residents and people stopping on their way through Claresholm.
- Rumours are abound due to the removal of the Doggy Bags, which were removed due to high costs
  - Some users believe the Town does not want the park because of the removal of the dog bags
- One user of the park had a concern regarding the weeds, such as the Canadian thistle. They felt that the town should spray. This should not be an option due to the following;
  - This park has native prairie plant species
  - Many pollinators, including bees and butterflies frequent the park

- The Gypsy Cuckoo Bumblebee is a species that is at risk in our area, information was sent to community members via mail outs in spring 2022

## Fair Days

- Bench Show:
  - Volunteered August 10 & 11 for Data entry
    - returned as a judge, has been volunteering since 2012 with the Bench Show
- Friday Family Fun night: August 11
  - Claresholm Recreation supplied Kites for decorating again as it was a success in 2022.
- Saturday August 12
  - Set up and take down of the beer gardens in Amundsen park for the Claresholm Skate park Association
  - Participated in the Town of Claresholms float dressed in a poodle skirt
- Sunday August 13: Participated in Adens Run at Kin Trail with almost 100 other participants



## Claresholm Skatepark

- Helped set up for Gravel Road Race Beer Gardens at Centennial Park
  - Fundraising Initiative
- Applied for the Rural Communities Foundation-UFA Grant, for \$100,000 on behalf of the Skatepark Association, submitted August 31, 2023.

## SARA-Southern Alberta Recreation Association

### Governing board for the Southern Alberta Summer Games

- The Town of Coaldale will be hosting the Southern Alberta Summer Games in 2024
- The Town of Fort Macleod has expressed interest in the games, potentially for 2025. SARA met with mayor Brent Feyter through Microsoft Team Meeting online May 29, 2023
  - At this time there is no update
- The City of Brooks has submitted a letter of intent for 2026
- Next AGM is October 3, 2023 in Lethbridge at the Nicholas Sheran Sport Council room.

## ARPA-Alberta Parks and Recreation Association

- Regional meeting September 14, 2023 in Coaldale Alberta
 

*“The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) and the Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation (SPAR) Branch of Alberta Tourism and Sport are partnering to facilitate a series of regional meetings throughout the province to bring stakeholders together for an opportunity to network, discuss and explore topics related to community sport, physical activity, recreation and parks. These conversations aim to identify sector needs, create partnerships and help advance shared policy outcomes of the sport, physical activity and recreation sector.”*

  - This session was really interesting, the results from the 2022 Alberta Recreation Survey are in
  - Grant Funding Streams have opened up as per Kerry McAndrews, Minister of Sport, SPAR Branch
    - Every Kid Can Play Program-Grant Deadline September 30, 2023
      - 3 funding streams, KidSport, non-profits
      - Annual Grant
    - Community Recreation/Infrastructure Fund (Small or Midsized projects)
      - \$80 Million over 4 years
      - Indoor outdoor Rinks, Pools
      - Program Development
      - Professional Development

*Details are to be released soon*

- Alberta Parks & Recreation Association Conference & Energize workshop October 25-29
  - Topics registered for:
    - *Fostering Collaborative Conversations for Community Development*
    - *Animate your Facility*
    - *Empowering Communities for Healthy Living: Collaborating with Choosewell and the Garden to Table Initiative*
    - *Green Spaces, Making Us Happy & Healthy*
    - *How to create Healthy, Fit, Proactive Community Members on a Shoestring Budget*
- One of the key items that the APRA has released this year are the results from the 2022 Alberta Recreation Survey. This survey reveals data on Albertans Favorite recreation activities, barriers to recreation participation and more. Excerpts from the previous recreation survey were used in the Claresholm Recreation Master plan

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# **UTILITY SERVICES REPORT September 2023**

Pine Coulee Raw Water Intake Marker





# **Claresholm**

**Utility Services Manager  
Brad Burns**

**3700 8<sup>th</sup> Street West      brad.burns@claresholm.ca**  
**Box 1000 T0L-0T0          Cell # 1-403-625-1687**  
**Claresholm, Alberta**

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## Regional Water Treatment Plant

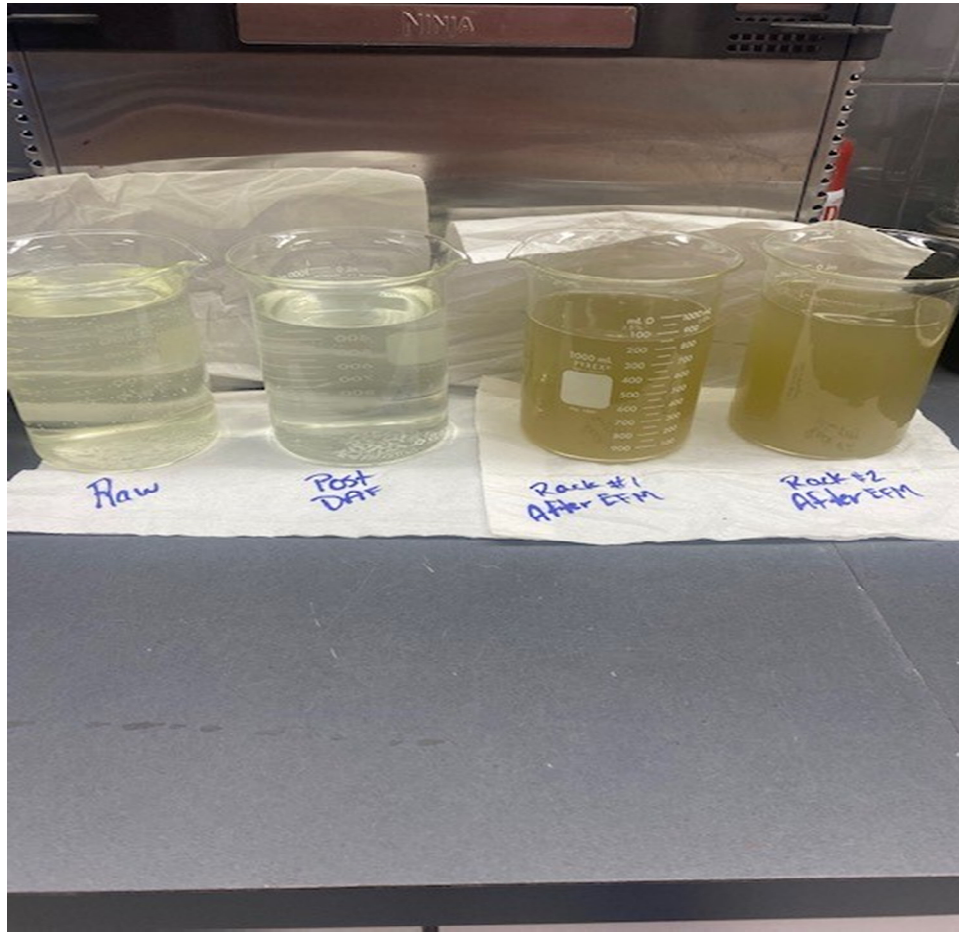
### Maintenance

- Calibrate lab testing equipment monthly.
- Inspect pumps, VFD's, piping, valves, and gauges daily.
- Check SCADA, electrical components and telemetry equipment daily.
- Check chemical rooms and DAF area equipment and process daily.
- Clean distribution chlorine analyzer and change solutions monthly.
- Test onsite backup generator monthly.
- Enhanced Flux Maintenance (EFM) or Clean in Place (CIP) on both PALL membrane racks.
- Flush and clean CIP tanks to the neutralization system.
- Unplug coagulant supply line to DAF system.
- Cut and trim grass
- DR3900 bench top analyzer sent into HACH for firmware update.
- Replace EF-1 fan motor and have JB rewired.
- Change bearing oil in highlight pumps (Distribution, Transfer, Feed, Backwash, Neutralization, Saturation, Neutralization).
- Change gear oil in DAF (dissolved air flotation) flocculators.
- CHAMCO technician on-site checking SULLAIR compressors and readjusting air dryer settings.

### EFM and CIP Membrane Washes Keep PALL Rack Membranes Clean



## Membrane Wash Water After an (Enhanced Flux Maintenance) EFM



### Alberta Parks and Environment Requirements

- Schedule 3 treated water quality limits daily monitoring, measuring and reporting frequency as per approval.
- Distribution samples for free chlorine residual throughout town continue to be compliant approval in accordance with schedule 2&3.
- Distribution samples for free chlorine residual throughout town continue to be compliant.
- Bacteriological samples within the distribution system showing no Total Coliforms or E coli.
- Cyanobacterial samples sent to Element Labs.
- Collaborate with AEP drinking water operations specialist about raw water treatment process.

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## Training and Continuing Education Credits

- Online courses available.
- Utility Operator completed level II water distribution certification.
- Self Defense course with town staff.
- 16 Personalities management workshops.

## Meetings

- Bi-weekly management meetings.
- Monthly onsite safety meetings.
- M.D of Willow Creek Service Agreement Meetings as requested.

## Safety

- Check SCBA monthly.
- Check fire extinguishers monthly.
- Monthly Public Works safety meetings.
- Monthly onsite safety meetings.
- Check eyewash and shower stations monthly.
- Test chlorine alarm detector monthly.
- Check Co2 detector monthly.
- Check emergency lighting monthly.
- Complete required hazard assessments.
- Tool box meetings for weekly jobs to be done.
- Fire extinguisher checks all buildings.

## Chemical

- Transfer chemicals to day tanks as required.
- Change gas chlorine bottles as required.
- Order and delivery of chemicals as required.

## Treated Water Pumping Stations and Reservoirs

### Highway Pump Station

- Schedule 3 treated water quality limits daily monitoring, measuring and reporting frequency as per approval.
- Distribution free chlorine test taken daily.
- Inspect pumps, VFD's, piping, valves, and gauges daily.
- Check SCADA links, electrical components and telemetry equipment daily.
- Clean chlorine analyzer and change solutions monthly.
- Test onsite backup generator monthly.
- Cut and trim grass.
- Calibrate and work on reservoir fill valve smart positioner in dry well area.
- Change high lift pump oil in distribution pumps.
- Replace air compressor for pneumatic valve operation.

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### East Side Reservoir (UFA)

- Check SCADA links, electrical components and telemetry equipment weekly.
- Check sump pump and onsite manholes.
- Check reservoir overflow ditch.
- Cut and trim grass.

## Water Distribution

### Universal Metering

- Meter readings as requested by the office.
- Replace/check ERT's and inspected meters as requested by office.

### Government Compliance

- Schedule 3 treated water quality limits daily monitoring, measuring and reporting frequency as per approval.
- Cyanobacterial samples sent to Element Labs.

### PRV Meter Vaults

- Check acreage PRV vault bi-weekly.

### Distribution Lines

- One Bacteriological samples sent to Provincial Health Lab for testing once per week.
- Distribution free chlorine test taken weekly.

## Lagoon and Wastewater Collection

### Government Compliance

- Code of practice for wastewater systems using a wastewater lagoon daily monitoring requirement.

### Harvest Square Lift Station

- Check lift station daily.
- Check SCADA pack, electrical components and telemetry equipment weekly.
- Test onsite backup generator monthly.

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## Lagoons

- Check lift station daily.
- Check SCADA, electrical components and telemetry equipment daily.
- Test onsite backup generator monthly.
- Inspect piping, valves and gauges daily.
- Cut and trim grass.
- Clean control vaults.
- Change oil in sewage lift pumps.

## Raw Water Lines and Reservoirs

### Government Compliance

- Code of practice for wastewater systems using a wastewater lagoon daily monitoring requirement.

### Pine Coulee Reservoir

- Chain Lakes Reservoir 80.87% level 1296.19 geodetic meters, 11656.42 (dam3).
- Willow Creek at OXLY Ranch flow 0.37 m<sup>3</sup>/s
- Pine Coulee Diversion Head Pond above Head Gates 1050.63 m.
- Pine Coulee Diversion Canal below head gates flowing into reservoir @ 0 m<sup>3</sup>/s
- Pine Coulee Reservoir level 28.96% 1043.68 geodetic meters, 14652.17 (dam3).
- Collaborate with AEP and MPE Engineering about outfall line fish screen protection with air bubbling system.

### Pine Coulee Reservoir Level



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## Pine Coulee Supply Line

- Visually check supply line valve, hydrants air release valves, vaults weekly.

## Raw Water Storage Reservoir

- Schedule 2 raw water daily monitoring, measuring and reporting frequency as per approval.
- Check claw compressors daily.
- Onsite raw water reservoir 6567 mm.

## On-Site WTP Raw Water Conditions Change Throughout the Year



## Golf Course

- Backwash water from process continues through the neutralization system to the golf course holding ponds.
- Golf course water diversion from Pine Coulee shut off at 1044.0 m as per AEP license.



## Willow Creek West Waterworks System

### M.D Chlorine Booster Station

- Distribution free chlorine and required test taken as per Code of Practice for a Waterworks System Consisting Solely of a Water Distribution System.
- Check building daily and record as per AEP code of practice.
- Clean chlorine line, injection quill and replace line or pump tube as required.

### M.D Industrial Airport Distribution System

- Provide help with the Airport system as per service agreement.

### PRV Meter Vault

- Check PRV meter vault operating pressure.

### West Water CO-OP

- Distribution free chlorine and required test taken as per Code of Practice for a Waterworks System Consisting Solely of a Water Distribution System.
- Check PRV and double check valves biweekly.

### Chemical

- Transfer chemicals to day tanks as required.
- Change chlorine pump setpoint as required.
- Order and delivery of chemicals as required.

### Hamlet of Granum

- Check water supply meter vault, electrical and telemetry equipment.
- Coverage for operator include daily checks at Treated Water Distribution Pump House, main sewage lift station and sub wastewater lift stations.

## Alberta Parks and Environment Requirements

- Code of Practice treated water quality limits daily monitoring.
- Bacteriological samples sent to Provincial Health Lab for testing once per month.
- Distribution samples for free chlorine residual throughout M.D Airport and West Water Co-op continue to be compliant.

## M.D of Willow Creek Chlorine Booster Station Chemical Pump Adds Sodium Hypochlorite to Potable Water Entering the West Waterworks Distribution System.





# INFORMATION BRIEF

Meeting: September 25, 2023

Agenda Item: 11

## COUNCIL RESOLUTION STATUS

Regular Scheduled Meeting - June 12, 2023				
18a	IN CAMERA: Moved by Councillor Cutler to direct administration to prepare a public participation plan as discussed in closed session. CARRIED MOTION #23-110	Abe	Planning on hold until after by-election and further direction is received from Council.	Ongoing
Regular Scheduled Meeting - September 11, 2023				
1	BYLAW #1746 - Moved by Councillor Kettles to give Bylaw #1746, a Road Closure Bylaw, 2nd Reading. CARRIED Moved by Councillor Cutler to give Bylaw #1746, a Road Closure Bylaw, 3rd and Final Reading. CARRIED	Tara	Bylaw signed, sent for registration.	Complete
7	RFD: ATCO Gas Franchise Fee - Moved by Councillor Kettles to approve a rate change in the ATCO Gas Franchise Fee from 10% to 12% for 2024. CARRIED MOTION #23-133	Blair	Coordinating with ATCO to complete required notifications and paperwork	Complete
8	RFD: Committee Vacancies - Moved by Councillor Cutler to appoint Councillor Meister as the Town of Claresholm's representative to the Regional Landfill Commission until September 25, 2023 when a permanent appointee can be chosen. CARRIED MOTION #23-134	Karine	Landfill Commission has been contacted	Complete
9	RFD: 2023 Alberta Municipalities Convention - Moved by Councillor Meister to approve the out-of-budget expenditure of increasing the costs for convention expenses from \$8,000 to \$14,000 for the 2023 year to facilitate a harmonious transition to a new Council. CARRIED MOTION #23-135	Blair/Karine	Registrations confirmed	Complete
14a	IN CAMERA: Personnel - Moved by Councillor Cutler to accept the personnel issue as presented in closed session. CARRIED MOTION #23-136	Abe	Updated job descriptions have been filed. The Union has been notified and the updated jobs will take effect the first week of October.	Complete

PREPARED BY: Karine Keys, CLGM, Finance Assistant

APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney, CAO

DATE: September 22, 2023

# INFORMATION ITEMS

## Meeting Minutes

**In attendance: Brad Schlossberger, Jay Sawatzky, Ashley Tebutt, Donna Meister, Kelsey Hipkin, Kendall Schille, Joanna Ridley**

**With regrets: Earl Hemmaway**

**1. CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 pm**

**2: APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion to approve: Ashley Tebutt**

**3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3.1 Regular Meeting Minutes from May 16, 2023

**Motion to approve: Joanna Ridley**

**4: CORRESPONDENCE**

4.1 PLSB – funding approved and already in hand

4.2 Minister McIver – reaffirming cabinet position

**5: FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

5.1 Financial Statement for the end of May 2023

Didn't need heat or AC for entire month of May

Insurance has been paid

**Motion to approve: Brad Schlossberger**

**6: REPORTS**

6.1 Library Manager's report

New monitor required for one of the computers

Gearing up for Summer Read Program June 21

Library purchased a WCCHS student painting for kids section

Received \$30k operating grant from Alberta Government

Claresholm Public Library Board  
Regular Meeting  
June 20, 2023

Jay hired a young man who will come in twice a week to help the older crowd with their phones/technology

**6.2 Plan of Service Committee report**

- Community Survey was made available June 5, closes July 5

**7: NEW BUSINESS** – Board not meeting for July and August

**8: OLD BUSINESS** – none

**9: ADJOURNMENT:** 5:15 pm

Next Meeting: September 19, 2023

## Karine Keys

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**From:** Seniors, Community and Social Services <seniorsinformation@gov.ab.ca>  
**Sent:** September 12, 2023 2:43 PM  
**To:** Karine Keys  
**Subject:** Age-Friendly E-News

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# Age-Friendly E-News

Alberta

## Supporting an Aging Workforce Policy and Inclusion Workshop, Job Fair, and Website

Two half-day events on **Supporting an Aging Workforce (SAW)** will be hosted in Edmonton at the Edmonton Convention Centre on October 26, 2023.

Mature workers (defined as those that are 55 years or older) make up nearly 20% of the labour force and can help offset existing and future labour shortages, and mentor younger workers. Some older workers face barriers to remaining employed, re-entering the labour force, or delaying retirement.

The morning **SAW Policy and Inclusion Workshop** for [professionals](#) includes a keynote speaker, interactive workshop and panel discussion on the barriers, emerging needs and challenges for organizations to support older workers remaining in or re-entering the workforce. To register for the Half-Day Workshop, or learn more, visit the CPHR Alberta [website](#).

The afternoon **Mature Workers Job Fair** and related **pre-event preparation sessions** are for [job seekers](#) 50 years or older. Mature job seekers can join free pre-event prep sessions (registration required) and attend the Job Fair at no cost (no registration needed). Prospective employers can register for a free booth; power is extra. To learn more visit the event [website](#).

If you're just learning about this topic, you can visit the **Balanced Teams** [website](#), which features a video about valuing, attracting, and retaining older workers.

(SAW) Through Policy and Inclusion Workshop  
8:00 am to 11:30 am  
Cost: Member - \$50 + GST | Non-Member - \$50 + GST

Mature Worker Job Fair  
12:00 pm to 4:00 pm  
NO Cost: Job Seekers (drop in job fair, or register for preparation sessions) | Employers (register for free booth)



Website



E-mail

For a print-friendly version click on "Read it online" at the top of the page.

Alberta Seniors, Community and Social Services  
600-10405 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton Alberta T5J 4R7  
Canada

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