

Candidate Questionnaire - John Hamill

1. What inspired you to put your name forward for consideration in this election?

-I see a need for leadership, vision and direction. All these are lacking and I believe that I have the where withal to provide them.

2. What qualifications and/or experiences will assist you in being an effective councillor?

-Having served 6 terms on City Council, I have the knowledge and experience to do the job justice. I have served on many committees as chairman, energy, economic development, development and infrastructure and highway 3 committee. While on council I was elected to the Alberta Urban Municipalities and chaired the finance committee, and was chosen to sit on the Special Forces pension fund, overseeing an investment fund of 1.3 billion dollars.

3. Please list your top 5 strategic priorities that you will commit to during your four year term.

- The airport, increasing length of runway, we have the land but have lost the drive to get it done. Tourism is a big revenue earner and we should give the committee's support in attracting summer games, winter games, curling championships etc. Utilities, the cost of the product is low, average cost \$20, so why is the total bill \$64? We are paying an exorbitant amount for, administrative, handling, line fees, etc. these fees have taken away the Medicine Hat advantage, and I commit myself to bringing it back. Crime in our city is rising, the police are doing a good job trying to keep the bad guys off the street, but its like fishing, catch and release, I will support our police service by whatever means to keep our city crime free.

4. What opportunities for growth and development do you see in the future for Medicine Hat? What strategies will you seek to implement in order to achieve this?

-I have already mentioned the airport as a necessary key to economic development and tourism. We must continue to drill for oil and gas, the prices are low compared to 3 years ago, but if our budgets are based on lower prices then we can continue to seek out the fields. Build a new college, and work to get university designation for our current college. Better use of our water front, and turn Echo Dale into a camp ground. If, and it's a big IF helium is available in sufficient quantities we should pursue it.

5. In the past Intermunicipal Collaboration has been entered into on a voluntary basis. The Municipal Government Act review will make the adoption of an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework a requirement. What aspects of the current Tri-Area Intermunicipal Development Plan would you like to see expanded, eliminated or amended?

-What we have at present is working well, and as long as the partners are satisfied I see no reason for change. How ever we must continue to monitor the use, and keep all partners satisfied.

6. Businesses in Medicine Hat pay a non-residential tax rate that is above the provincial ratio average. In your opinion what is a reasonable ratio? What factors should be considered when calculating the non-residential tax rates?

-Not knowing the provincial average I can not make a satisfactory answer, however I can say they are too high. When I was in business I was always surprised by the amount that was my building was assessed at. I am aware the assessment x tax equals property tax, which was five times higher than my residential tax.

7. The City has committed to a Downtown Revitalization Development Plan. What is your personal vision for downtown Medicine Hat? Are there any further opportunities that should be included in the overarching future plans for development in the core of the City?

- When that was all we had for a shopping area it was good but times have changed and we now have a couple of large malls to the East, that draw a lot of people. Many things have been tried to promote the core, and all have failed. We need a large anchor to attract business and shoppers. There is a perception that the sidewalks roll up at 5pm. Also, that there is a lack of parking, which is not true. At the mall you park a long way from the store and if you could measure it you probably walk a lot further. Idea's how about building a paddle boat that would house a restaurant and casino and moor it below city hall? Or build a large dock so that people can boat down from Echo Dale and visit the restaurants, Library, Esplanade, etc. A city without a core has no soul

8. Medicine Hat has made major investments into recreation facilities as well as decisions for cutbacks. What vision and direction do you have for the development of our recreational facilities so as to best service the population of Medicine Hat?

-The facilities we at present are adequate, sell the down town arena to the Minor Hockey board it is a good building, they along with a partnership with the Y could remove a couple of the top row of seats to make an indoor running track. The MHL could run their own league and competitions in there and I'm sure make it profitable

9. Medicine Hat travelers are left with limited options when it comes to air travel. To facilitate a more convenient and efficient travel model for Medicine Hat and area how would you pursue lower airfares, increased flight frequency, better connection times and increased load capacity for travelers?

-We need to lengthen the runway so we can have larger carriers, and lower fares. I would encourage airline carriers to come to our city and if necessary sweeten the pot.

10. How do you feel that the council and the City can provide a more efficient business-to-government process to streamline government services for business both online and within City Hall?

-Lets start by asking all customers, 'how can we help you', cut the red tape and be of assistance to all comers.

11. As costs for services increase and costs to businesses increase at all levels of Government, how will you evaluate the increases in fees and charges to ensure fee structures are reasonable and that any increases are implemented over a reasonable period of time?

-Increases in fee's and charges are never reasonable, they should always be questioned, and evaluated, had that been done in the recent transit fracas we would not have had the outcry that took place. It was discriminatory and disgraceful, to try and cut services by \$600000 on the backs of the elderly, handicapped, and single mums and dads who depend on public transit which is a PUBLIC SERVICE to get too and from their work place.

12. What are your plans and/or strategies for achieving financial sustainability while balancing service delivery, capital requirements, cost containment and fair taxation levels?

-Stay within your budget, as is done by every household. A simplistic way of looking at it is, if your income is \$2000 and you are spending \$2200 then you must trim your expenses. We as citizens do not have the luxury of over spending, then increasing taxes and user fees to offset the over spending, keep to your budget.