

## Candidate Questionnaire

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

I feel I have some unfinished business on City Council. I was fortunate to be elected as your Alderman for the City in 2004 – 2007, but was unable to continue until now. With my term as Chairman of the Board for Medicine Hat College coming to an end, the opportunity to serve as Councillor was an opportunity I could not resist. With council experience, my banking/financial expertise, and proven leadership I am probably the most suitable candidate to tackle the economic problems the city faces currently, which is now starting to affect services. Many members of the community came forward to suggest that I run for Mayor, however, my decision to run for Councillor is the best fit for me and my family at this time.

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

I was honored to serve on City Council from 2004 to 2007, your elected candidate for MLA in 2012 and now candidate for Councillor. I have significant board experience, including City Council, First Chair of the MH & District Chamber of Commerce, Community Foundation of Southeastern Alberta, and my recent term as Chairman of the Board for Medicine Hat College to name a few.

I feel my experience as a banker for close to 20 years is urgently required given the poor financial situation the City finds itself in currently. I can assist with a way forward that will strike a balance to the taxpayer of expense control while still providing quality services.

Bottom line, I am not afraid to challenge status quo and administrative recommendations, have demonstrated political experience, and have a proud history of community involvement for over 20 years. As you can see, my enthusiasm and passion for this city knows no bounds.

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

1. Financial Accountability to the taxpayer. I commit to the proper management of municipal finances through the eyes of an experienced banker. This will provide a balanced approach to remedy an unfortunate financial situation the city is currently in.

2. Simplify local government- get back to what we are good at, focus on efficient and effective service provision, and execute with excellence to citizens.

3. Strong and resilient local economy by diversifying industry in Medicine Hat to create growth – an effort that I am currently involved in, and will continue when elected.

4. Strengthen relationships with other key players that drive our local economy and provide jobs i.e. MHC, Methanex, CF, Goodyear. Bring back Team Medicine Hat, comprised of many invested groups, (i.e. MH Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Medicine Hat, MHC and many more) to collectively lobby other provincial and federal governments. My intent is to knock down silos and look for partnership opportunities within the community that can drive economies of scale to save money and still grow Medicine Hat. Through my past leadership at MHC that is already underway.

5. Make the tough decisions and not postpone them. Medicine Hat is at a significant crossroads. We cannot defer decisions any longer, or make costly mistakes as illustrated by recent events with transit. I have demonstrated experience in laying a path of success at MHC. I intend now to show the leadership required with the city, and work with my fellow councilors to get back in touch with the citizens expectations of good governance.

### 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?

1. Communicate with citizens and business to share the vision of the city to promote Medicine Hat, i.e. the Conference Board of Canada study indicating Medicine Hat will have the strongest economic growth in comparison of eight other mid-sized cities. [http://www.conferenceboard.ca/press/newsrelease/17-07-27/improved\\_economic\\_outlook\\_for\\_many\\_canadian\\_mid-sized\\_cities.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/press/newsrelease/17-07-27/improved_economic_outlook_for_many_canadian_mid-sized_cities.aspx)

2. Ensure municipal bylaws, zoning and regulation are not barriers.
3. Right fit/ right time. Work with other local agencies/corporations to drive collaboration on a shared vision to balance economic and social growth. You cannot have one without the other.
4. Continue to support and enhance economic development with INVEST Medicine Hat in my advisory board role.

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?

During my aldermanic term, I was one of the first elected officials to sit on the original working group, composed of Redcliff, MH and Cypress County. I believe;

1. It is imperative that we all work together in land use frameworks i.e., a landfill in Cypress County should not border a MH/Redcliff residential area.
2. Work together for economies of scale to save money for all i.e. partnership in a water treatment plant.
3. Reinforce the message that what is good for the region is good for everybody from an economic development perspective.
4. Discuss ways to harmonize economic development planning to make our neighbors allies, not adversaries.

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?

Quite frankly, businesses in Medicine Hat have been hit hard (right or wrong) at every level of government; federally (proposed tax changes to business), provincially (minimum wage increases funded by small business) and municipally (dramatically increased commercial property taxes). Increased spending at every level of government is the cause, and because politicians avoid taxing the voting public for fear of being defeated at the next election, businesses make easy targets. We have seen businesses close firsthand in Medicine Hat. Unfortunately, given the operational deficit the City of Medicine Hat finds itself in, I cannot support any decreases in this area at this time, however, I am opposed to increasing taxes in this area. Businesses are being crippled, and need to be supported in order to provide jobs for this region. Going forward, an ongoing comparison of non-residential tax rates in cities with comparable populations within Alberta, provides a framework to work upon. We can adjust up or down from there given our local needs/demands, given certain financial realities of the day.

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?

I was proud to be part of the inaugural Downtown Development Incentive Program over 10 years ago. The intention was to two fold. 1. Provide a sense of pride to the city in restoring a vibrant downtown, from shuttered buildings to vibrancy and new development. 2. Re-development of existing areas are extremely cost-effective, given the tremendous cost of expanding the city's footprint both soft costs (police/fire/transit) and hard costs (road maintenance). I am pleased to see the results of the revitalization of downtown, however we still have work to do. Going forward, the framework should be reviewed with successful applicants for balanced feedback to drive enhancements. Overall, by working with existing infrastructure in what we have already, we can still grow our community, but in a manner that is environmentally sensitive and practical.

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 only word I can think of to answer this question is balance. Councillors are faced with many conflicting asks for recreation facilities from an increasing amount of user groups. Who knew of pickleball 5 years ago? First priority for me would be the adaptation/reconfiguration of existing facilities in a cost-effective manner to suit

new/existing pursuits. I WOULD NOT be opposed from user groups coming forward with unique ideas to lease city owned facilities that are under-utilized. This idea is not new, with Connaught Golf Course, Medicine Hat Golf & Country Club, the Medicine Hat Curling Club, and Medicine Hat Mavericks as examples. Working with these user groups, we can provide quality services, utilize existing facilities more efficiently, and reduce operating costs significantly. We also need to pay better attention to growing trends and adapt accordingly in our city's recreational master plan.

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?

Continued support of existing lobby efforts by the Chamber and other groups including the City to have another carrier come to Medicine Hat will facilitate a competitive environment that will lower fares and increased flight frequency. The City of Medicine Hat has committed funds to enhance our airport runway in addition to the recent expansion. We are fully prepared now to accept another carrier.

As a user, I am sometimes frustrated with the lack of available flights. I am of the belief that this is a huge barrier in commerce within the city, in trying to coordinate with government officials, prospective new businesses, and the traveler in general.

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?

I have had the pleasure on being on both sides of the table as an elected Alderman and an Executive with the Chamber of Commerce. I believe a strong working relationship that is respected on both sides is crucial. Listening to feedback from businesses that do not have time to search for online city documents, FAQ's, or "how to" procedures on the City's website is a good starting point. Embracing technology can certainly empower the businesses to quickly gather the city information they require. "Time is money" is not lost on me. Finally, getting to a "yes" with support and help from the City is a preferred method of customer service vs. a firm no, which accomplishes nothing. The municipality may have been guilty of that in the past, but progress is being made.

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?

As a business owner myself, I would really appreciate a "heads up" of any impending increases to fees or charges in order to build it in the budget. Unanticipated costs, such as the recent provincial carbon tax for example, and the "too fast too soon" increase to minimum wage can have devastating impacts that reactively need to be acted upon. Having some time to proactively plan is extremely beneficial.

It is imperative that ANY increases to fees and charges are done fairly and reflect growing costs only. I have already commented in a previous question about political unfairness in tax applications to businesses.

In addition, the city has been guilty in the past of not adjusting fees on a regular basis, then suddenly raising them in a manner that is disruptive to the sector impacted. Off-site levies come to mind as an example, something I had to deal with as Chairman of Municipal Planning during my term on City Council.

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

Balance. Fairness. Transparency. The fact that the City of Medicine Hat currently cannot meet monthly obligations, officially called the "operational deficit", is quite frustrating for me as a person who works in the financial industry. The fact that no "back up" plan existed to cover the inevitable (and predicted) fluctuation of the oil & gas industry that we, as a municipality participate in, is shameful. As "the protector of the public purse", financial responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of City Council, and in fact, blaming the downfall of our city's finances based solely on the rise and fall of gas and oil, is an admission of guilt in financial planning inadequacy. We, as regular households, are constantly reminded to "save for a rainy day" or "be prepared for emergencies". I commit to doing the same with our city to create contingency plans, instead of the consistent ask

for aid from the taxpayer with increased taxes. In the next 10 years, the ask in yearly taxes will not be commensurate with inflation (it will be more), which I think needs to be highlighted.

So the plan:

1. City Council and administration have to communicate, be transparent, and provide plenty of notice of impending changes that affect the citizens and businesses of Medicine Hat.
2. Remove political motivation for votes by unfair increases to fees or cuts of services.
3. Work with department heads in looking for effective cost savings, with the promise that funding will support business cases that are cost efficient, lead to increased productivity and/or enhance service. Without the support of the managers, who have a hand in the development of department budgets, we will continue to witness needless spending at the end of the fiscal year, in protecting the rationale for funding the respective department next year.
4. Zero based budgeting needs to be reviewed. The rationale behind this style of budgeting espouses the manager builds the budget from zero. The only problem with that is the fact that the manager will review last year's budget and spending to build the budget. Essentially, the self-repeating problem of the previous point (point #3) is reinforced.
5. Tough decisions on spending must be adhered to all times. Is this spending a "must have" or a "nice to have".
6. I support an immediate hiring freeze, i.e. an increase of FTE of city staff. I support the natural elimination of positions within the City of Medicine Hat through retirement and or transfers and a six month moratorium of hiring for the vacant position to determine if the need for the position still exists. We need to be sensitive to our city staff, and not create an ongoing fear of cuts.
7. Rotate a forensic audit team to be dispatched to all City programs on a rotating basis to ensure all departments are run efficiently, while keeping an eye on offering quality services.