

Scott Raible Candidate Questionnaire 2017

1.

My desire to run for Mayor of Medicine Hat stems from my desire to address and correct the disconnect that I have felt from the Mayor in regards to the realities that many of our residents face, as well as an apparent disregard shown to those who were affected most by those decisions. An example was the recent changes to transit that cost people jobs and drastically affected those who rely on public transit. That Council refused to accept or listen to any input or concerns when the changes were announced is a symptom of a much larger problem. Many in our City, both residents and businesses, have gone through economic hardships, while our City blindly continues to raise utility and tax rates, non residential property rates, as well as user fees, in an attempt to try to and balance the budget on the backs of the taxpayer, without addressing the fiscal mismanagement at City Hall.

Our City cannot tax itself into prosperity.

I was also dismayed and concerned with how the City treated local businesses when Council pushed ahead with curbside recycling, which again adds further fees that residents are forced to pay, while at the same time threatening the livelihood of the local businesses that currently offer curbside recycling, as well as eliminating \$75,000 from Redi Enterprises, with hardly a pause or reflection on the consequences of their decision.

Furthermore, when I saw how the City and Council were treating local business owner and resident Julie Tracey by refusing to correct the tax assessment error to her property assessment, and the policies that our City enacted which allowed the error to happen, I felt compelled to put my name forward, to bring about public discussion on these issues.

I believe that the City of Medicine Hat deserves both a clear vision, as well as transparent, accountable leadership, that actively seeks public input and direction, to be a voice and advocate for all of the residents of Medicine Hat, always working hard to put the needs of the people of Medicine Hat first.

2.

I have lived in Medicine Hat for almost twenty years, where I am currently raising nine beautiful children with my wife, Jenetta. I originally worked as a meat cutter at what was formerly Lakeside Meat Packers, where I took a bus each day from Medicine Hat to Brooks and worked myself up to lead hand, before being hired as an associate pastor at a church within the city. It was here where I started Lighthouse Broadcasting and launched Alive 99.5 FM, Medicine Hat's first faith based radio station, which won the 2004 "New Business of the Year" from Entre Corp and the Medicine Hat Chambers of Commerce. After five years, I sold the radio station to pursue a Bachelor of Education degree at the Medicine Hat College and University of Lethbridge. I have been teaching for the past seven years and was nominated for the Edwin Parr Teaching Award in 2011.

Over the years I have been involved with the Medicine Hat Youth Action Society, Saamis Youth Justice, Mayoral Youth Committee, Medicine Hat Area Refugee Team, as well as coach for a

variety of local teams, as well as involvement and directing for several plays within the community. I also returned to radio as the afternoon drive announcer for the past year with Praise 93.7 FM.

It is these unique experiences that give me a wide range of leadership and interpersonal skills, as well as insight, that would allow me to both be a strong voice for the people of Medicine Hat, and which would allow me to serve the people of Medicine Hat with passion, compassion, and tenacity.

3. My top strategic priorities would be to the following:

First and foremost my main priority is to ensure that Mayor and Council exist to serve the people of Medicine Hat in a transparent, accountable manner, and be strong advocates for the taxpayers and their families. To this end, I would strive to ensure that the Medicine Hat Advantage remains strong by ensuring the following:

- Medicine Hat is the best city to live in.
- Medicine Hat is the best city to raise a family.
- Medicine Hat is the best city to own and/or operate a business.
- Medicine Hat is the best place to retire.

4.

I believe that there are many opportunities for growth and development for the City of Medicine Hat. The main area to focus on is economic growth as industry and businesses bring jobs, and jobs bring people and families into our community, which is necessary for real growth. The strategy needs to be aggressive and intentional. The City needs to recognize the advantages of having a thriving and growing business community, and the overall city-wide growth it encourages, which happens when we offer incentive packages including property tax rebates, discounted utilities, and a continuance to our Off Site Levies Assist over the next five years. These property tax and utility incentives need to be offered to existing businesses as well to increase business retention.

I also believe we need to grow and develop our energy division so we can reclaim the dividend to ensure the Medicine Hat Advantage. The City needs to grow and develop its oil production as well as continue to increase the production of electricity that can be sold off to generate revenue. I believe we need to continue with the oil drilling and exploration in Saskatchewan, as well as exploring the possibility of drilling, extracting and refining helium in the area. The City also needs to diversify into renewable energy resources, including solar, wind, and water, and continue to build up our Heritage Fund from the profits of the energy division.

5.

I believe that the Tri-Area Intermunicipal Development Plan needs to continue working towards combining essential services and have a long term plans and strategies for attracting economic opportunities, managing land use, subdivision and development, improve consistency in land development and enhance inter-municipal communication in regards to how to accommodate long term growth and even possible amalgamation as the three communities continue to expand.

The key to an efficient and effective Tri-Area Intermunicipal Development Plan lies primarily on developing relationships with the other communities, and though we need to be open and honest in our expectation for Redcliff and Cypress County for contributing financially to the services that their residents are using in Medicine Hat, we need to keep diplomatic and respectful in our approach, understanding that when communities financially contribute towards these facilities and services that they will expect to have input in towards to direction and operation of those same services and facilities.

The Tri-Area Intermunicipal Development Plan needs to be proactive, to ensure to that all three communities benefit, and avoid reactive legislation in the future.

6. It is unacceptable that businesses in Medicine Hat pay above the provincial average for non-residential taxes. In order to attract new business, and to sustain existing business, we must ensure that not only are our non-residential tax rates are never above the provincial average, at the very least they should be half a percent lower than the average. We want to ensure the Medicine Hat Advantage for businesses. I agree with the Chamber recommendations that the City of Medicine Hat Assessment Department needs to diligently correspond with property owners to obtain all information necessary to accurately assess market value, as well as to consult with and obtain information from other sources including Alberta Land Titles, real estate Multiple Listing Services, financial institutions, and other local appraisers. I also agree that in coming up with the non-residential property tax, that the Assessment Department needs to actively meet with other municipal assessors and other professional assessors and appraisers to discuss market conditions, market values, processes and practices. As mentioned above, we need to create and sustain the right environment for economic development and we need to be very intentional in that regard.

7.

I believe we need to continue to move towards making our downtown core a thriving place of business, entertainment, and leisure. I believe that the downtown businesses should be able to vote on whether the CCDA and a levy on the downtown businesses is the best way to stimulate growth, and vote to disband the CCDA if that is the wish of the local downtown business owners. I personally believe that if the City is serious about attracting additional businesses and growth downtown, instead of a levy, then there needs to be an incentive package created for new businesses to open downtown through property tax rebates and discounted utilities and the City needs to aggressively and actively seek a corporation or business to develop the lot on First Street through reduced land cost. A thriving downtown would also mean additional job creation in our City, and another part of the Medicine Hat Advantage to explore and enjoy.

8. Investment into recreation facilities are important as a sign of a vital and vibrant community. It is important to ensure that these facilities are accessible, and financially feasible, and to do so, it is important for the City to think “outside the box” and come up with new and innovative ideas. The City needs to be open to wading pools, which might be a great addition in replacing the Heald Pool, as it adds a different recreation outlet than spray parks for families to enjoy, and are lot more cost efficient than full outdoor pools as no lifeguards are required.

I also believe it is important to ensure that there enough recreation facilities for local sports teams, which is also an important sign of vitality within our community. With the closure of the arena, there has been increased concern of lack of affordable recreation facility space for sports such as hockey and lacrosse. The City of Medicine Hat needs to be open to working with potential nonprofit community groups that would be willing to manage these facilities, to ensure the facilities remain open for groups to use at reduced cost to the City of Medicine Hat.

9. I agree wholeheartedly with the Medicine Hat Chamber of Commerce that the City of Medicine Hat needs to aggressively pursue options for lower airfares, an additional destination to Edmonton and other major cities, increased flight frequency, better connection times and increased load capacity for travelers. Current flights to and from Medicine Hat are very cost prohibitive, have very limited flight frequency and connection times.

10. I feel that Council and the City can provide a more efficient business to government process to streamline government services for businesses, both online and in City Hall. I believe that there needs to be a very clear “one stop shop”, or “one window” for businesses both in City Hall and online. Steps need to be taken to ensure ease of clarity and use when it comes to businesses interacting with City Hall.

I also agree with the Chamber that processes need to be streamlined, such as a “one step” process that allows an applicant to apply for one permit that covers more than one component of a project, so a business owner does not have to make multiple trips to City Hall. I also agree that we need to ensure that there is a cooperative, helpful environment in the administration of the bylaws, whereby municipal staff are encouraged to facilitate an outcome sensitive approach, which reinforces that concept that “Medicine Hat is Open for Business” and that we have an environment that supports and encourages business and economic growth.

11. As costs for services increase and costs to businesses increase at all levels of Government, I believe it is essential that the City of Medicine Hat consistently and regularly evaluate increases in fees and charges to ensure fee structures are reasonable and that any increases are implemented over a reasonable period of time. I believe that Council needs to be a strong advocate for businesses in our community and region, to ensure that fees and costs from the various levels of government to businesses are fair and reasonable.

12.

I believe that public service delivery for residents needs to be reliable and guaranteed to ensure the Medicine Hat Advantage. Residents pay taxes to have access to certain services and facilities, and to increases taxes, while increasing user fees creates an unnecessary burden on the taxpayer, without addressing the issues of financial mismanagement at City Hall.

By increasing user fees or cutting these services, this erodes the Medicine Hat Advantage and negatively affects the confidence and contentment that people have in their community if people cannot access or take advantage for that which they pay taxes for.

I believe that City Hall needs to focus on spending restraint by conducting value for money audits on each department at City Hall and provide departmental budgets based on the findings

of those audits. Spending needs to be restricted to what is essential and what is needed, but not at the expense of public services that residents support with their tax dollars and that they rely on.

As mentioned above, I also believe we need to grow and develop our energy division so we can reclaim the dividend to ensure the Medicine Hat Advantage, and to continue to build up our Heritage Fund from the profits of the energy division.