

Dear Candidates:

The Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce invites you to complete the attached questionnaire based on our policies. The deadline for returning your completed questionnaire is noon (12:00 p.m.) on October 5, 2017. We will be posting your responses on our website the following day, October 6, 2017. We will not be editing your responses and will post them on the website as we receive them, so we encourage you to copy and paste into a Word document and submit typewritten responses for legibility.

The Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce is a non-partisan organization and as such we will not be meeting individually with any candidate that is running for office in this election cycle. If you would like to know our positions on issues that are of importance to our members, our policies are on the advocacy page of our website and viewable here:
<https://medicinehatchamber.com/pages/Advocacy#municipal>

The Chamber is committed to the democratic process and ensuring that our members have the tools to make an informed choice come election day. Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire. We look forward to sharing your views with our members.

Candidate Questionnaire

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

My purpose of running in this election is to provide a new perspective for our City Council. I have not seen any vision in our council for some time. I want to bring the vision of a strong developing future within Medicine Hat while providing the perspective of an individual who has had to work hard every day to make ends meet. I have times in my current career when I sit at home waiting for the ability to go to work. We need a city that is vibrant and growth is steady not stagnant.

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

I have studied and followed politics and how our City, Province, and Country run for about 12 years now. It has become a part of my life. I believe that I have a proven record of working within organizations, one example being the Medicine Hat and District Canada Day Society where I was a member for 15 years and sat as Vice Chair for about 4 of those. My experience working with the general public gives me an advantage of hearing what is affecting our citizens and what they want to see happen. Working in the homes of our city for 15 years gives me an experience you cannot find anywhere else.

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

1. Our city MUST to be transparent!

The citizens of our city vote us in to a position to help them and speak for them. Every person who asks a question of our city representatives deserves an informed response.

2. We NEED new business.

Our city MUST make it irresistible for new business to join and grow within our city. We not only can offer lower utility rates (not currently being the average) but offer a 5 year tax incentive with conditions that building must be commenced or completed. We are a central hub point for the railroad and highways. We have the #1 Hwy and the #3 Hwy intersect here, we also have the railway intersect here. Everyone has been fighting to keep our local border crossing open 24 hours for years: If we bring business here, the crossing will have no choice.

3. We MUST reduce our crime and drug use.

Some of the issues can be fixed with a better economy, we need a community that new business and families feel safe in. Working with our Police Service to begin a Citizen on Patrol and Neighborhood watch programs can help with this.

4. Our utility rates....

I have had the honor of being named an executor in a will. It has given me a perfect example of our utility fees on a house that is not in use. I have complained for years that the fees are approx. 50% of the bill. Recently, I have seen that a house that uses approx. \$14 in utilities (hot water tank and water for the lawn) has a utility bill of approx. \$178. That is approx. \$164 / month on a house that is sitting empty for just service/distribution fees. This also brings up that Lethbridge has a lower rate of power then Medicine Hat as the residence of Lethbridge can shop around for their utilities, choosing the lowest provider.

5. City Department Accountability.

Our recent transit change has brought to light some issues within our city departments. We MUST keep our public services serviceable, and find ways to streamline the departments to save expenses instead of cutting services. It is not reasonable or financially feasible to have every function of our city go through multiple departments to complete 1 task. We need to look "in house" to begin our "financially fit" before we begin cutting services. This will also

help cut “red tape” and assist in new business obtain the proper documents to build and develop within our city.

The more development and business in our city, the more people live here, the more taxes from increased development, the more revenue our city can make. Higher taxes push people and business away, lower taxes and utilities entice people and business to move in creating more city revenue. The city will make more off of developed land than it ever will off bald prairie.

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?

Our city is sitting right at the junction point for other major cities. We allow all the product and goods to travel right through our city and the best we can provide is a hotel or truck stop. We should be looking into relocating our current rail yard that is in our city to Dunmore rail yard. We can then open up the downtown area providing an area that is not “dead ended.” We are a city surrounded with farmers and ranchers, yet we allow every other city around us utilize that resource. Lethbridge gets a majority of that business, from potato farmers to hemp farms. Brooks has the meat processing plant. Medicine Hat has now just lost its grain feed production facility. Smaller businesses keep building outside our city, right on the edge but just outside the tax bracket of Medicine Hat. I see immense opportunity for growth and development within our city in the future. We need to begin now to entice businesses to come here. We cannot afford to sit and wait around for the next 4 years. We need to lower our tax rates on new business, lower our utility rate to a competitive advantage, offer tax incentives to build and develop. By doing these, we can bring business in, which brings employment to our city, gives our youth a place to work when done school instead of moving to Calgary or Lethbridge, and brings in more revenue to our city.

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?

The development plan between Redcliff and Cypress County is going to be a difficult process. As Medicine Hat, Redcliff, Dunmore / Cypress County all grow and expand, at some time we will have to converge. We are currently separated by a road in Redcliff and a golf course on the other side with Cypress County. We have to be cautious as to the costs involved. Running transit to Redcliff and Dunmore might be great for some, but would it be utilized and who picks up the cost? The inclusion of water and sewer could come at immense costs. As part of growth in our area, it would be practical for Dunmore’s rail yard to expand removing the one in our city. I would love to see our areas merge in all aspects as we grow; we just have to be careful to respect all parties.

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?

When deciding what tax ratio to utilize for non-residential we need to look into how well our economy is doing. During hard times, we need to lower our ratio to help entice new business to come to our city or keep existing business in our city. We have to compete with Calgary who holds the lowest non-residential tax rate in Canada. Again, Medicine Hat currently sits at an average tax rate in Alberta. The average is not an advantage and does not help promote our city for growth. We need to sit at the lowest end of the scale of average at a minimum to help bring new industry to our city.

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?

Revitalization of our downtown area is at this point, not feasible. We have very high crime rates within our downtown that any revitalization attempts are deterred. The first step to bringing people downtown is make them feel safe, and provide them with safe, easy, parking. Our downtown core has become a place for homeless, unemployed, and addicts to hang out. Part of this is due to the drug related facilities located in downtown. A majority of our social service facilities are also located downtown. Businesses do not want to be located beside all of the facilities for those that “hang out” until the next bit of help come along. If you look at our crime charts the MHPS has provided, you will see that our downtown area is a breeding ground for crime. Not a way to revitalize the downtown area. So, we must first clean up the area, make it safe, then look at revitalization.

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?

I would love to see the Medicine Hat Arena stay open, as part of a financial reason as well as a public service reason. Our city loves their ice time. It is much cheaper to repair the facility and maintain it then it will be to tear it down and rebuild a brand new one. If we can grow this city with new business, families will want to stay. Seniors will want to be close to their families, and our recreational facilities will become utilized more frequently. We can utilize the arena to house farmer markets, and rent the kitchens to small business' to help the facility to bring in revenue. Pools in the area are a great way for people to enjoy an indoor relax or workout. The closure of Riverside Pool is unfortunate. I understand that costs are high to repair and renovate, but it might be something to look into. We don't have to be hasty to just cut and shut down features within our city when we have so many other ways to cut costs and streamline expenses without affecting service.

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?

Sadly, Medicine Hat is stuck with our current air travel arrangement until we expand the airport. The plan to expand is in the works with the relocation of our #3 Hwy. This will take some time as we require a population base large enough to support a larger airport. As our city grows, we will see the expansion of the airport out towards the old “Spitz” warehouse.

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?

By cutting the endless “Red Tape”. Our City Hall has seems to have issues with communication from one department to another. Simple tasks that could take minutes to complete are taking hours to days because of lack of communication. Departments' failing to respond to requests is another issue that will have to be addressed quickly, just because you work for the city does not mean you don't have to work hard for your paycheck. We have some fantastic people working in our City Hall. We need to have them be able to access all the information for the task at hand, instead of being able to complete half of a form and then having to forward it to another department to complete the other half. The “front line” workers also have to have the ability to call and ask questions or have a reference book when they have questions or concerns.

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 inflation increases, our city does need to increase its revenue. I do not believe in increasing the taxpayer's rate of pay, increasing taxes, to make up that shortfall. We need to look into diversifying our economy to allow for an increase in revenue. Seeking new business and expanding the tax revenue base will bring in the difference as rates increase and allow our city to remain competitive. We cannot just rely on increasing user fees and taxes.

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

I would like to see our city restrain its spending by not cutting services to the tax payers. We must first look in-house for cost saving ways just as we would within our own homes. I enjoy the flower beds throughout our city just as much as anyone. Could we not plant perennials instead of annuals every year? That would save costs of running a greenhouse all year long. The idea that our current council has come up with is to not water the grass/trees as much in the city. Brown grass throughout the city does not promote people to want to live/work here. When it comes time to perform tasks within our city, I have noticed that quite often, the city will tender the jobs out to local contractors. Fantastic, support our locals. My cost concern comes when the city is paying wages for people who can perform the same task at a lower cost. We also need to look into ways to streamline our City Hall; are the tasks being performed in an efficient manner?