

Candidate Questionnaire

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

My reason for running back in 2013 was my concern for the future of Medicine hat. We did not seem to have a plan as to how we were going to attract new business, help current business prosper and expand and expand our population and increase our tax base. I think we have made progress in how we market our city and how we treat business at city hall, however we still have room to improve. As a member of the Invest Medicine Hat advisory board I am excited at the opportunities we have in the pipeline. Will they all result in new business and job growth only time will tell but it is important to know that these opportunities take time to develop. I am also concerned with the remaining deficit we have to close over the next 9 years. We can not do this by just raising taxes and fees we need expand our tax base and look at how we can become more effect on how we deliver services to our residents.

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

I bring more than 30 years of business experience working for large multi national corporations and also owning several businesses of my own and now 4 years experience on council. I feel at this critical time when we are working on our budget issues it is important to have members of council who have had to make difficult decisions in the business world. I really feel it is important to have councillors who understand the challenges that our business community face, it is very important to have councillors who have had to sign the front of a pay check.

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

- Continue to work to create the conditions in our city which foster local business to grow and expand and also attract new business to our community.
- Control city spending by becoming more effect on how we deliver services.
- Continued support for the DMO to attract more tourists and sporting events to our community. New sports council which was recently approved by council.
- Improve the relationship that the city has with Cypress County and the Town of Redcliff in the hopes that they will help fund some of the operating costs of our recreation facilities.
- Continue my work on the twinning of Highway 3 and the extension of hours and services offered at the Wildhorse boarder crossing.

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?

We have a great opportunity to attract businesses who rely on electricity as one of their major input costs, because our city generates our own power and own our distribution network we are sheltered from the high transmission charges that other municipalities have to charge. Projections are that these charges are forecast to increase at least another 50%. Greenhouse operations, value added food production and processing can be major opportunities. Millions of dollars are being invested right now in R & D in plant based protein development. As an example, 40% of the hemp grown in North America is grown south of the number 3 highway between Medicine Hat and Lethbridge yet we have no processing here. Other crops that could be processed are Peas Lentils and Granola. We also have opportunities in pilot training, drone testing, renewable energy solar and wind and further expansion of Atlantis Research Labs. It is important to support Invest Medicine Hat as they continue to develop the opportunities we currently have in the pipeline. They are operated by business people who understand business and how they can help companies both local and new move their projects forward.

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 current Tri-Area Intermunicipal Development Plan is a 90 page document which was created in 2010 after 4 years of work. It is a 50 year plan which covers land uses ,sharing of resources and services as well as joint economic development activities. Although we have not seen the details of what the province is mandating in the new MGA I would like to see more revenue sharing to cover some of the costs of our cultural and recreational facilities. The lack of proper transportation and logistics is an impediment to future economic expansion in the area and I would like to see a cooperative approach to improving this for the benefit of all residents. Municipal waste is a growing problem and I see cost savings for all three municipalities if we can put tighter a plan to deal with this issue.

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?

I feel that the ratio should be at the provincial average or below however there are many factors that determine what that ratio will be including population, the ratio of residential to non-residential total assessment. Relative values in properties in the commercial sector between municipalities are also a factor a similar property assessed at 1 million dollars in our city might be assessed at 2 million in Calgary for example. The mill rate might be lower there but the total tax owing would be much higher in Calgary. It is interesting to note that the Non-residential to residential tax ratio in 2012 was 2.31 during the next 16 years the ratio has been as high as 3.16 in 2008 and it is now 2.34 in 2017. The ratio has only increased from 2.31 in 2013 to 2.34 in 2017 so this council has worked hard to keep the ratio from increasing.

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?

As we continue to upgrade the underground infrastructure and street scaping we can continue to offer our current assistance program to help the existing and new businesses in the downtown area. I would also like to keep the 90% municipal assist on off site levies to encourage more development in the area.

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 feel that we are in pretty good shape as to what we currently have for recreation facilities. Our ice surfaces are aging and I would like to see us investigate the building of a 4 sheet ice complex. This could be either private or city owned complex whatever would be the least expensive to operate while keeping user fees competitive. We have great recreation facilities and we need to use that fact to promote the quality of life we offer in our community as we attract new residents. We also need to use these outstanding facilities to attract more tournaments and sporting events with the start up of our new sports council.

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 have upgraded the airport terminal and now have the federal government grant to upgrade the runways. The city has been in constant contact with West Jet in an attempt to get them to offer service to our city. The problem with our current carrier is their inconsistent service, planes leaving late or being cancelled. We are also at risk of losing our direct service to Edmonton because that carrier is losing their AHS contract for fixed wing ambulance service. With the current service being very expensive and inconsistent it is very important to obtain an alternative service. If that happens we just have to make sure it is supported by the business community and the residents of Medicine Hat.

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?

The city will be introducing their new online application software to apply for development permits, this should speed up the approval process and make it easier for applicants to follow up on where their application is in the process. The city is also working on a new process inside city hall to help businesses to help them connect with all departments as they move through the approval process.

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?

It is my opinion before we ever look at increasing any fees we must investigate whether we have looked at every avenue of efficiency in the department. Increasing fees should be the last thing we do. We must also look at the effects of the fee increases. Are we disgorging business development? Are we competitive with communities around us?

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

Expanding our tax base must be a key in generating more revenue without increasing the mill rate. As we bring in new business development and new employees both non resident and residential tax base will increase. Our home prices are still reasonable compared to other major cities across Canada I see no reason why we are not doing more to promote that fact. We need to encourage more seniors to retire here many of them have retirement income higher than a lot of working folks and they still have to spend money on services throughout the community.

I think we need to take another look at all the services we offer and are there ways to deliver those services at a lower price. This is not going to be easy and an attitude of continuous improvement must be adapted by all city staff and council.