

Respondent

24 Anonymous

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Time to complete

1. Please enter your full name and municipality.

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Andy McGrogan Medicine Hat City Council

2. What active role have you played to improve our community prior to running for council/mayor?

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I served as a police officer in this community for 40 years, my last twelve as the Chief of Police. Through my experience and training I learned the workings of the City intimately including strategic planning, budget forecasting and control and learned the importance of safety and well-being to a vibrant community. I started two successful businesses and owned commercial and residential properties. I served as a board member on the Medicine Hat Woman's Shelter and finished my term as President. I raised my family in this community coaching hockey and little league baseball and was a big brother to a boy that I had the honor of watching become a man of success in this community.

3. What initiatives would you propose to improve tourism, investment attraction and development to our municipality and region and support business recovery during/after the pandemic? *

Medicine Hat is an amazing place for tourism and investment and has so many features that make it a desirable place to live, raise a family and enjoy leisure. Recreational facilities, such as the Family Leisure Centre and Coop Place as well as the City's many beautiful trails and golf courses have not been utilized to their full potential. An example is our numerous golf courses. Although I am not an active golfer there has never been a collective effort to promote golf tourism collectively and Council can provide leadership in coordinating the municipal and private courses to attract tourism and promote the sport that has survived the pandemic. In my opinion, one of the most important roles of City Council is to keep taxes, fees and bureaucracy as low as possible to allow business to recover and thrive

4. In Medicine Hat, businesses pay a higher proportion of property taxes compared to the residential sector. Medicine Hat's tax gap of 2.35% is one of the highest in Alberta. What is your position on the current approach to taxation and your thoughts on potential strategies to narrow this gap?

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As a recent non-residential taxpayer, I have also felt that the tax disparity was difficult to understand. Taxes are collected to pay expenses to provide services to our community and one way to keep taxes reasonable is to ensure that spending is as focused and efficient as possible. Local businesses have been hard hit throughout the pandemic and encouraging our community to shop and spend local is critical. City Council must take a leadership role in educating and encouraging our residents to focus their dollars within our community. Once elected, I commit to fully learning and understanding the taxation process to better understand what effect the rate disparity impacts both businesses and residences.

5. If elected, what specific steps would you take to encourage & promote entrepreneurship within the region?

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The first step in encouraging and promoting entrepreneurship is to continue to create a "yes we can and how can we help" culture at City Hall. One of the first barriers entrepreneurs face is the perceived (or real) red tape at City Hall. Designating navigation specialists at City Hall to assist people in getting through the labyrinth of bureaucracy would greatly improve the experience. Additionally, it is important to support the "Invest Medicine Hat" model and underscore the importance of focusing on attracting and retaining new business ventures big and small.

6. What is your stance on COVID-19 related laws that mandate requirements, including masks and vaccine passports?

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In my opinion, public health orders are the responsibility of the Provincial Government (GoA), who employ the majority of Medical Professionals and Scientists in the Province. I am opposed to creating behavior bylaws unless it is a last resort and the GoA has abdicated its responsibility to keep our community safe. The Mayor and Council do have a strong leadership role in lobbying the GoA, and subsequently supporting and enforcing the measures they deem appropriate. I am strongly opposed to politicians using COVID-19 as a political tool to garner votes and I believe that the role of government is to balance safety with the well-being of our economy.

7. What is your plan for publicly-funded services (examples would include Medicine Hat Public Library, power plant, facilities) if elected?

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I am in favour of a strong municipal workforce that is focused on serving the community. A strong, efficient, and effective municipal workforce underpins a strong economy. Private enterprises are excellent partners in completing work for citizens, however, the bidding process must be fair and transparent. I believe there is a perception that the City has "favorites" and as such, the bidding process is

skewed to provide an advantage to those contractors. Whether this issue is real or perceived, the City can avoid the distraction by introducing a greater level of transparency and communication throughout the process. An example of private enterprise co-existing with city services is tree cutting services. The city maintains crews to look after emergent and sporadic maintenance.

8. How important is it for our region to have a local Community College? What specific steps could the municipality do to work better with Medicine Hat College to provide ongoing opportunities for future learners?

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I believe our Community College is important to the vibrancy and overall stability of our City and is probably one of our largest, under-utilized resources. In my previous role with the MHPS, I formed a partnership with the college to help support induction training, which provided a mutual benefit to the learners, the College, and the Police Service. I would support exploring more opportunities to engage the College and find mutual initiatives that support learners and citizens alike. Exploring multi-use/shared use of recreational facilities may offer synergies that could help reduce costs and enhance services. The south side of the city is mostly void of leisure facilities, so the city should explore partnership opportunities that could align with the Cities long-term recreational plan.

9. How will you attract newcomers to the district and address the needs for a skilled workforce? *

I believe the best way to attract newcomers is to ensure that we have a safe, vibrant community that offers great recreational facilities and amenities. Skilled workers come with industry investment, so attracting industries that align with the City's development strategies is essential. Council must develop strong, progressive policies that are consistent and illustrate a roadmap to acceptable outcomes.

10. What is your stance on the importance of mental health & wellness support in our region? What ideas, implementations, and initiatives would you put forward to improve the overall mental health & wellbeing of our community?

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We have experienced our share of tragedies related to mental health issues over the past year in our community. Council needs to acknowledge and support mental health initiatives that are proposed by the MHPS, mental health advocacy groups, and other supporting City groups. Working extensively with Mental Health-related initiatives over my career, I've learned that we are not alone in the battle against mental health/addiction, and partnerships with not-for-profit organizations and Alberta Health Services are key to success. Council must demonstrate leadership by supporting progressive initiatives that make it easier for mental health professionals to introduce new programs and services.

11. How will you further diversity and inclusion initiatives in our region, as it relates to each of the pillars in the Chamber's Vote Prosperity Platform: <https://www.medicinehatchamber.com/voteprosperty2021/> (<https://www.medicinehatchamber.com/voteprosperty2021/>)

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In my previous role with the MHPS, I was instrumental in developing initiatives with the City to formalize an internal and external policy approach to diversity and inclusion. I believe that recognizing individual differences, regardless of what they may be, makes us stronger as a community. Inclusion should be viewed as a process of evolution, not revolution, where we celebrate diverse ideas and experiences with respect and dignity. The principles above relate to all the pillars outlined in the pillars of "Vote Prosperity."

12. On a municipal level, how do you intend to address climate change and pollution?

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The City of Medicine Hat is a leader in responsible environmental stewardship in addressing climate change and pollution through initiatives such as the "Hat Smart" program, the green waste program and the blue bin recycle program. Implementing these programs was a good first step, but there are many more opportunities to help ensure we leave the next generation with a cleaner City than we started with. Many other municipalities are grappling with the same issues and continual scanning for best practices and remaining nimble as an organization to shift and change is important.

13. What strategies will you use to communicate and engage with the community and remain accountable to the citizens?

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As elected officials, we represent and are accountable to the community for the policies and actions conducted at City Hall. Council and Administration have made good decisions that have not been thoroughly and effectively communicated to the citizens they serve. Council and Administration need to examine policies around communication and look for more effective ways to communicate with citizens. Appreciating that there are legitimate reasons to discuss some matters behind closed doors, such as personnel and competitive bidding discussions, the rationale for privacy should be clear. As an elected official, I have every intention to be as open and honest as possible with City business.

14. Are there any other issues you wish to address or highlight that were not mentioned in the questions above?

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Power generation and gas field ownership are very technical and risk-laden ventures that, in their current state, are experiencing diminishing returns. It will be important to reanalyze these revenue generators through multiple lenses if the City wishes to exploit them to our full advantage. I would look to retain the assets we presently have and look for ways to diversify to keep pace with the evolving energy industry. I also believe it's important to include industry and business experts in the decision-making process to help ensure that the City fully understands the viability of these ventures moving forward. This is particularly true as we look for solutions to synergize fossil fuel revenue with important emission reduction and climate change initiatives.