

Respondent

< 8 Anonymous >

16:50
Time to complete

1. Please enter your full name and municipality.

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Brian Dueck, Medicine Hat

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

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I have been a volunteer in the church community for my entire life, bringing hope and peace to many. This year, I have been involved in the MyCityCare events to clothe the needy. I also spent time as a volunteer tutor at the Medicine Hat College. In addition to my time, I regularly donate to local charities.

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? *

In the last couple of years, Tourism and Invest Medicine Hat have done some fantastic marketing and strategic grants programs to advance both issues. Their work is very targeted and intentional, giving back high value for money spent. There is a movement to cancel everything that the current council is accomplishing. I would ensure that these departments don't become "cancelled" for

political gain.

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 the total taxes paid is relatively lower in Medicine Hat the gap is somewhat deceiving; that said, we are right at the high end of the range. If we combine the overall lower tax rates seen in Medicine Hat and position ourselves closer to the 2/3's position on the range comparable to other cities, our actual taxing on business would be very competitive. This rate would improve the attractiveness of our city to businesses without placing an undue burden on single-family dwellings.

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

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Businesses should generally stand and fall on their own merit. Government should not be picking winners and losers. With this in mind, I would take a position of minimum interference. That said, one of the chief complaints I hear in business is that the city administration is hard to deal with. Some of that falls to the provincial and federal requirements, which we do not control, but I would push the city to simplify processes and get out of the way wherever possible.

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

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The province employs thousands of trained health care experts. As we do not employ any of these as a city, I would defer to provincial

decisions. That said, I would continue to lobby the province for a regional approach to any restrictions and push them to justify any additional or removal of restrictions to improve public confidence.

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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The utilities must remain publicly owned. The price increases in other jurisdictions that have sold their utilities is a lesson we need to learn from. That said, the carbon tax is increasing, and we must take steps to reduce our carbon footprint, or those same profitable utilities will become huge liabilities. The city's current investigation into carbon capture may be the lifeline that saves our utilities from becoming a loss instead of a revenue generator. The library has fantastic facilities and programs, which I am committed to funding as they are now. Recreational facilities are a hot topic. There is presently a community survey and study being done to update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. I would wait to see the results of this study before making commitments. Some of the current facilities are unsustainable. The question is not if we should keep them, but when and what we replace them with. We need to have quality accessible recreation facilities. Whatever we do it must ensure it achieves the community's best interest as a whole.

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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Having Medicine Hat College here is an excellent service for our residents and an attractor of new residents. As tourism is often the precursor to people moving to a city, Medicine Hat College should be highlighted alongside our other city features to promote Medicine Hat to the world. Doing this will cross benefit the exposure for Medicine Hat College and benefit our city as it attracts newcomers. Offering the College grants for creative community projects would also work for mutual benefit. For example, the University of Alberta has a beehive pilot project on the roof of its facilities. Perhaps we want to look at a partnership for a similar community project.

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

Education, tourism, parks and recreation, competitive tax rates, marketing, land development, and affordable housing are among the many aspects that influence this outcome. The issue is complex. The element of this that the council has the most direct control over is taxation. I am firmly committed to keeping our tax rates among the lowest in the country. In all other matters, the council must actively hold the city departments accountable for their execution of each of these issues and reinforce our priorities to city staff when the outcomes are not in line with city growth objectives.

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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When I went through clinical depression in my mid-twenties, finding the resources I needed was hard to do. Now there are many excellent programs, both government and charity run. But finding them is still not always easy during mental health difficulties. The city has a role in making these resources easier to access through marketing partnerships and initiatives like the HealthIM app that assists law enforcement in compassionately responding to mental health crisis events.

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.medicinehatchchamber.com/voteprosperity2021/> (<https://www.medicinehatchchamber.com/voteprosperity2021/>)

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Every human is born with the same inherent value. Gender, age, skin colour, sexual orientation, religion, or any other way we can divide people, is 100% irrelevant to that value. We all need to be welcoming of everyone to the conversation. We are Hatters working together for the benefit of all. When a group has been excluded from the discussion, we need to bring them to the table and actively

find common ground. We are a team and need to make sure nobody is stuck on the sidelines. Working towards the end of prejudice will come from focusing on what unites us rather than what divides us.

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

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The city's current pursuit of becoming a carbon capture leader is the most significant thing we could achieve to lower our carbon footprint. Executing this is critical to our city on the environmental front and is also vital to attracting business and increasing city revenue to fix our massive debt problem.

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

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As evidenced by my campaign, I try to be very thoughtful in what I bring to the table. I write extensively, not just about what I think but why I believe it. I intend to continue doing that. But my writing is a one-way street and should extend from first listening and investigating. To this point, I have asked many groups if I may come to visit and have been invited by others to come to hear their concerns. I have met with every single person who has been willing. I aim to be well informed before I speak. But I am also ready to change my position when someone presents me the evidence I had not understood before.

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

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Medicine Hat is within 3% of its debt cap and has burned through \$500M in reserve money. We still have a significant reserve fund, but Medicine Hat will have no future if we do not correct our present course. Everyone at an election wants to hear a promise of everything

we could have. The sobering reality is that we must operate responsibly now and put our money into projects that will see a net increase in future city revenues, or we will lose everything we already have.