

Respondent



33

Anonymous



150:25



Time to complete

1. Please enter your full name and municipality.

*

Jim Black, Medicine Hat

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

*

I spent 5 years on the SE Children's Services Board and 7 years on the former Palliser Health Board during my 18 years as a resident of Medicine Hat. I also have spent many 100's of hours fund raising for such organizations as: the Curling Club, the Senior Men's Slow Pitch Club, the German Harmony Club, the Track Club, the Summer Games, the 55+ Provincial Senior Games and I am presently helping to raise funds for the upcoming Special Olympics.

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? *

I propose that the Chamber start promoting Medicine Hat, with all its trails and proximity to the Cypress Hills, as a family mountain biking destination. Reduce red tap for businesses by following up on the recommendations of the Chambers Vote Prosperity

Document. I would be in favor of a moratorium on tax increases over the next two years to allow families and businesses to recover from the financial stresses created by the pandemic. I also support the Chambers recommendation for the twinning of Highway#3.

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?

*

Prior to the 2013 election the way property values were assessed changed here in the City. That change caused an increase for all property owners but proved particularly problematic for business owners. I believe, based on the information provided in the Vote Prosperity document, a revisit of how we assess property values is in order for the next Council.

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

*

I have advocated for years that Entrepreneurship should be introduced into the High School Curriculum as an option. In the early 90's, as principal of Duchess School, I found funding through the Federal Government to offer students a 3 credit course called Rural Entrepreneurship. It was highly endorsed by the local business community and several of the students enrolled in the course went on, after high school, to start their own businesses.

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

*

If you consider that, the alternative to masks and vaccines, may be another lock down, give me masks and vaccines every time!

Businesses and church communities have had enough of lock downs.

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

*

I view these as investments in a better Medicine Hat and should be maintained. Owning our Utility, for example, is one of the things that the Chamber can use to promote the City as a good place to do business. A library is one of the essentials of a civil society and we are all the better for having one.

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?

*

I believe this is time to approach the Department of Advanced Education for a designation of Medicine Hat College as a University. If you want to start attracting companies with benefit paying jobs, this I believe would be a proper step in that direction. Back in the days of the Palliser Health Board, a University here in Medicine Hat certainly would have helped us compete with Lethbridge in attracting young MD's to the SE Region.

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

Revise the Alberta Works Program that allowed students to be employed, earn an income, work towards their High School Diploma and write the Apprenticeship Exam. This would help our region build it's own skilled workforce over time. This program was offered by the Prairie Rose School Division from 2014 to 2016, through funding from the Provincial Government. The Program produced, for our region, 3 Journeyman Electricians and 2 Journeyman Heavy Duty Mechanics.

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?

*

In my platform I've stated that I have a strong belief in recreation and sport as benefits to mental and physical health. I believe that funding which supports recreational activities is not an expenditure but rather an investment.

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

*

I don't understand this question!

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

*

The City has taken a proper step by reducing the size of the buses and converting to natural gas. New equipment purchases need to have the lowest carbon footprint possible. My personal bias is that if the City presently uses herbicides and pesticides, stop using them.

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

*

I will act in the same manner as I did when I was a school principal. I will answer all emails and phone calls within 2 business day provided the questions are reasonable and submitted in a respectful manner. I will continue to be out in the community volunteering and playing sports. I will always have the time to talk to anyone who wishes to express a concern or provide an idea, again, so long as it is done in a respectful manner.

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

*

In the 2013 election the development of the downtown core was a Chamber issue as well. One of the challenges noted then was the problem of absentee landlords. If that is still a problem, the Vote Prosperity document does not address it. If it is still so, why not offer a possible solution?