

Respondent

< 1 Anonymous >

04:48
Time to complete

1. Please enter your full name and municipality.

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Marco Jansen, 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 member or, or volunteered with: Community Leadership Committee member, Community Foundation of South Eastern Alberta. Family Fun and Flight Committee member. Bike Medicine Hat Infrastructure Committee member. Former Wildrose/UCP Constituency Board member and Past President. Medicine Hat Musical Theatre Lighting Designer. Police Point Park volunteer. Esplanade Theatre volunteer stage technician.

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 am not a marketing expert, so it would be presumptuous to suggest I know what initiatives will work. Rather it is my role as Councillor to ensure the right people with the right qualifications are in a position to develop those initiatives, and to also make decisions that

make Medicine Hat a desirable destination for tourism and development, give these experts something to 'brag about' so to speak.

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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Tax calculation is very complex, a small change can have a far-reaching ripple effect which may, or may not, be desirable. Any changes to the current approach resulting in a positive net benefit to the community, and are well studied as to the total impact, will always receive serious consideration.

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

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I will always welcome ideas and proposals from individuals and groups who seek to promote entrepreneurship, but we as a City must also ensure that we properly support the businesses that are already here. It is one thing to attract new businesses; it is another to help maintain them.

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

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I am not a medical professional, and despite the access to information the internet provides, I am also not a researcher. While I can certainly question those with the necessary background and qualifications about their decisions, once those decisions are made I will follow them. The right to choose is a fundamental one. If a business chooses to require masking or proof of vaccination, then it must

also be easy for the customer to wear a mask or provide that information, if they so choose.

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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Providing public service to the Citizens is the core responsibility of Council. These services must be accessible to those who need or want it. They must be operated in a cost-effective and sustainable manner. If it is the desire of the Citizens to have, grow, and maintain these services, then it is incumbent on Council to respond to those desires.

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 a highly regarded post secondary institution like Medicine Hat College within the community addresses a number of needs and as such is exceptionally important to the health, growth, and desirability of the City. The most basic step to working better with any institution or industry is to invite them to bring their vision, plans, and requirements forward and truly listen to them. Once that is understood then it is easier to find what role the City can play in realizing that vision.

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

The City needs to begin by taking care of their own. Many City Employees see first-hand how their departments function, and have viable suggestions for improving them. However they are often discouraged, or even threatened, when they suggest change. Engaging and supporting these Employees will make their departments more effective. This will require training and support systems where the City can allow local business and industry to partner with the City, where the business might not have access to these systems

otherwise. This has the cascading effect of creating a more effective City workforce, which improves the services provided to the public and attracts newcomers, which then spurs growth in the business sector creating greater demand for a skilled workforce.

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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It is encouraging seeing the increased awareness in our society about the importance of mental health and wellness. Similar to some of my previous answers, I am also not a Mental Health professional, so it is not sensible to presume that I know how to address what our community needs. I would welcome those that do have the necessary background to come forth with their proposals and learn how the City can help facilitate them.

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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As a Councillor, it is my responsibility to ensure that the policies and procedures the City has in place do not have barriers to diversity and inclusion. If those barriers do exist, then as a representative of all citizens, it is my duty to them to eliminate those barriers.

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

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First, we must ensure that our policies, practices, and regulations support a sustainable, greener, environment. Then we must empower

those with the appropriate oversight to enforce them, and also to use metrics that accurately reflect the impact of the enforcement to guide future changes. Densification, as an example, is a possible means to reduce the pollution and climate change arising from residences.

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

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There are so many vehicles for public engagement; it has never been easier to understand what people in your community are thinking. Online petitions or surveys, video teleconferencing, and social media all provide numerous opportunities to communicate, in addition to good old-fashioned in person interactions. I find each of these is effective in their own way. The caution is to not rely on only one method, as this alienates those who do not communicate in that manner. There is also a hazard of only listening to those who share your own opinions, often referred to as confirmation bias. I am very aware of those hazards and have always sought to hear from those with differing ideas since they may possess information I was not aware of, or sometimes there is a new path that reveals itself after fulsome, respectful, debate.

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

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The lack of transparency at City Hall is an area of tremendous concern. So many committee and Council meetings are held partially or completely behind closed doors that accountability to the people of Medicine Hat is severely diminished. I have been quite vocal about this, and pledge to never move, second, or vote in favor of, a motion to close a meeting unless it is clearly explained why it is necessary, and I am convinced the reasons given are valid.