

Respondent

< 27 Anonymous >

56:31  
Time to complete

1. Please enter your full name and municipality.

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Robin Kurpjuweit ward 4 Cypress County

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

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I've been a part on numerous boards and clubs in Medicine Hat and Cypress County. My wife and I have been foster parents for the past 5 years and had 15 children through our home during this time. So whether it's coaching kids, helping the most vulnerable, or serving on a board in our community, helping people is in our DNA.

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? \*

Provincial partnerships would be beneficial for the Cypress Hills/Elkwater. That's a real gem in our region. Development in the county needs to be done carefully because we aren't set up to be a high density municipality. So larger Ag/Industrial could be an opportunity... our main focus though should be getting the most out of our ag industry. Strategic investment should be made in order

to attract specialty crops and we need to continue to pursue ways to develop more land that can be irrigated. All of this should be done with the end goal of food processing and production being done locally and should fit into a regional plan where south eastern municipalities can collaborate to make this more of a growing and processing hub.

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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Cypress County has some of the lowest taxes in the province. I've been an advocate to set a target within the county to be at the 20th percentile for taxes provincially. This is fair for all land users and ratepayers. It keeps us low, and competitive, but also brings a balanced approach. It brings in more from our linear assessment which allows us to be able to afford a higher service delivery.

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

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I'm an entrepreneur. Our county is very business friendly. Our regional partners like the chamber are better supports than we can be as a government, but reducing barriers to entry or clarifying bylaws and documents for would be investors is certainly something we can continue to work on.

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

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Within the county we will follow the provincial governments direction. As someone who has lost someone close to me due to Covid, I

hope that everyone does what they can to protect themselves and people around them.

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'd like to see progress made on the Dunmore Equestrienne Centre. There's a lot of public support for the project and it is something that we should be able to work on together. The ag industry is look at having to upgrading their seed cleaning plant. If part of a strategy to be more efficient and bring in processing businesses, I could get behind this too. Regional water is another big desire among many county residents who with utilize wells or have to haul water in. We have recently completed our water master plan and acquired more water license to allow for this type of project to move forward pending funding. Regional water projects can seek provincial funding so we have been pursuing this angle as coops don't qualify in the same ways.

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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This is an interesting idea. I don't have an opinion on this but I'm sure opportunities could exists for ag type programs.

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

Regional collaboration on economic development is important. We need to continue to grow our population. As municipalities we can help with this by appropriately planning and having developable land ready to go.

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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Recreation, community, belonging... all affect mental health. These are all things that many of our communities provide. But stress and anxiety are killers. As leaders we are responsible to be proactive and plan to avoid causing avoidable collapse. This means exercising sound governance... prudent financial planning and forecasting and not selling out our future for short term game. Most of the programming can be supported by local government but is delivered provincially.

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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I haven't seen the pillars, but here is my candid response to equity and inclusion. We need more people getting involved at all levels. More women, more minorities... we need to see a culture shift. A friend of mine recently said that political forces are making empathy impossible these days. This needs to change. We need to return to the days where we can be different and still be friends. We need to listen to one another, hear one another. God gave us two ears and one mouth. Let's take a hint ;)

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

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Sustainable planning and climate stewardship are important. Most farmers and ranchers have known this for generations. I do not believe though that wanting to be more sustainable and responsible means that oil and gas work is bad. Alberta is a leader in innovation, safety, and environmental stewardship... this wasn't always the case, but we have come a long ways.

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

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My phone is always with me, I have my Facebook page, and I'm easy to find. I'm active in the community and am ready to listen when someone wants to chat.

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

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A terrific opportunity for our region arose this past week when I was elected as Chair of the Rural Caucus for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. This is excellent for all of us. The roll involves leading the rural caucus and speaking for rural municipalities nationally to the federal government. All of my expenses for this work are covered by our provincial association not Cypress County, yet we have a strong advocate speaking for our region at the national level. I'm excited about the opportunity to represent my home and look for ways to build bridges in hope of make my community better! But, to do this work, I need to be re-elected so I continue to work hard and hope for the opportunity to continue representing ward 4 and the residents of Cypress County!

