

Medicine Hat City Council Election 2025

Full Candidate Responses — Compiled by the Medicine Hat United Ratepayers Association (MHURA)

“Your City. Your Voice. Your Vote.”

These responses were collected directly from Medicine Hat City Council candidates by the Medicine Hat United Ratepayers Association (MHURA). They are presented in full, unedited form to promote transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making ahead of the October 2025 municipal election. MHURA remains non-partisan and is committed to helping voters understand each candidate’s position on issues of fiscal responsibility, affordability, and governance.

Gord Cowan

- 1) Medicine Hat council has approximately \$700,000.00 of taxpayer money in reserve.
- 2) Lobby for a 3 year tax freeze, lobby to eliminate MCAF fee, lobby to eliminate utility bill fees and service charges.
- 3) completely comfortable in reading all kinds of financial documents. As a former business owner i did that routinely.
- 4) The MCAF fee is just a tax grab nothing else. Finding efficiencies in the utilities dept will offset the amount of the taxgrab.
- 5) Transparency is a catch phrase word
The general public should basic access to city financial information.
- 6) Taxes are a sea - saw between residential and commercial if one goes down the other goes up. The only way taxes can drop is if spending is reduced.
- 7) Community safety is in the hands of the MH Police dept. Homelessness should be addressed by the city working with volunteer organizations that have more experience and insight whkle dealing with these issues.
- 8) Professionalism is just an expected part of the job. It has to be maintained at sll times.
- 9) councilors all realize collaboration is the only way things get done. They only have one vote so collaboration with colleagues is important.
- 10) [blank]

Kevin Monson:

Thank you for the questions! I will be happy to answer them honestly and to the best of my ability.

1. According to the city, the budget for 2025-2026 is designed to operate as a balanced one. That being said, it relies on both a property tax increase of 5.6% each year, and assistance from city reserves, which in my eyes should be considered more of a deficit than a balance. In my opinion, the next city council should do all they can to avoid running a deficit and relying on reserves or further tax increases, but also try their best to avoid cutting any beneficial services. This would mean putting a hold on some projects that would be considered non-essential such

as a Southside Recreation Facility, as this could have a large cost we may not be able to afford right now.

2. Factors such as grocery prices, insurance, rent control and the education portion of our property taxes are outside council control so I foresee affordability still being an issue over the next 4 years regardless of what the next council does. However, tax and utility rate increases are the two major affordability factors that the city has some control over, so the next council needs to do all they can to avoid raising these costs any further. I believe the next council also needs to advocate strongly to the province and the federal governments and be the voice for residents for those levels of governments to step up and do what they can to address the affordability issues outside city control. Cuts to funding happen more and more to both municipalities and community programs and without help from the province and federal governments the city is ill-equipped to handle affordability on its own.

3. I am not an accountant by any means so my financial experience is limited, but I do have some experience with budgets and financial plans through post-secondary education courses, as well as managing a business for nearly ten years. Were I to be elected I would strive to expand my knowledge and consult experts in the community so when it comes time to vote on budgets or finances, I am able to make informed decisions for the benefit of all city residents.

4. The MCAF is a fee that the city should not have to charge residents, as we own and operate our own utilities and this fee is designed for cities with third-party operators and I would support working to reduce or eliminate it for residents. That being said I am unable to fully commit to eliminating the fee at this time, as I want to be as honest as possible and that is a guarantee I just can't make. This fee was introduced to help balance the city budget, and my fear with eliminating it without planning is that it would negatively affect city services and taxpayers. I am in support of striving to get rid of the fee, but not without a plan to account for the missing funding for city services.

5. Currently, city council meetings and city budgets are posted online for public view, and I appreciate that the city offers easy to understand summaries of certain budgets and plans for residents that are not well versed in government level finances or legislation and I would like to see this policy extended for meetings and votes as well if possible as not everyone has the time to attend or watch all council meetings. I would hope that the next city council makes all decisions possible in public meetings, as this can help maintain public trust and transparency. I think all major projects and decisions should have ample time for public consultation, so residents can feel they have been properly included in the use of their taxes.

6. I have more to learn on this topic, but as of now I would hesitate to support a business tax rate reduction at this time. Alberta has one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the country, and the tax rate in Medicine Hat is lower than Edmonton and Calgary I believe. Lowering the business tax could help economic development, but I think this could damage an already strained budget and put additional burden on residential taxpayers. That being said, I am in favour of providing other incentives to businesses to set up shop or expand in our city, but I think

there are more cost-effective ways the city can make this happen without burdening the residents (off-site levy reduction, permitting and application fee reduction, clear fee and development timelines).

7. Any conversation about crime or homelessness needs to also address affordability. As stated above I believe the city can help with this by striving to avoid tax or utility increases that directly affect affordability (and in turn crime and homelessness) as well as advocate to the province to increase funding to community supports such as overnight shelters, food banks and mental health supports. Were residents to have better access to mental health, addiction and employment services I believe we would also see a reduction in homelessness and crime, as addressing these factors deal with root causes, as opposed to focusing on more reactionary measures like policing or increased sentencing (which the city has little control over anyways). Measuring success in these areas can be difficult, but policing statistics and use of community programs can be a good start to see trends.

8. I think all elected officials should strictly maintain professionalism and integrity as there are representatives of our city and its residents. I think of myself as a very positive, optimistic and professional person that is able to have tough conversations even with those that disagree with me without forfeiting integrity or decorum. I would commit to all available communications and ethics training so that I can have tangible education to help me in my goals of maintaining professionalism and public trust.

9. I think disagreements and differences of opinion are unavoidable in democracy, and actually a good thing! Council should be a cross-section of the residents of Medicine Hat and if council voted unanimously on every single vote, I feel like there would be some residents that feel council does not truly represent them. That being said, council needs to strive to work through disagreements in a positive and respectful way, and not dwell or hold grudges if votes don't go the way they want. I think effective and respectful communication is key, and I hope the next council is composed of candidates that are well equipped to handle the task of working together for the common goal of a better and more affordable life for residents, even if they disagree on how that is reached.

10. Should I be lucky enough to be elected, I hope to work as a cohesive team with the next council to increase the quality of life in the city for all residents. I believe my positivity, communication skills and willingness to learn would make me an effective and informed council member, and I would do all I can to make sure I represent voters in the best way I can and make them feel like they have a voice at the table.

Thank you for reaching out, and if you have any other questions feel free to let me know.

Kind Regards,

Kevin Monson

Randall Noble:

Candidate Questions for 2025

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Do you believe the City of Medicine Hat is currently in a fiscal surplus or deficit? What specific steps will you take to manage reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly?

I believe they are not aloud to have a deficit, so they are either even or in a surplus. I would make sure departments are not going over budgets, when they provide their budget request they include 3 different quotes for each project, item, etc to show they have budgeted properly for the expense. We need to make sure we are only spending on our needs first, then if we have left over we can spend on wants if it will benefit Medicine Hat

Taxes & Utilities

2. With rising property taxes and utility rates, what specific steps will you take to make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable?

We need to come up with a fair and gradual plan that is fair to citizens, businesses, and the city. We also have to show them we are using these dollars effectively to move Medicine Hat forward. So I would table a temporary tax freeze to help everyone, until the plan above is developed!

Financial Literacy

3. How comfortable are you with reading financial statements and budgets? Can you give an example of how you've applied this skill, and what specific steps you would take on council to ensure sound budgeting?

I am comfortable reading statements and budgets. Having run some restaurants I was in charge of budgets and make sure we accomplished them.

MCAF Fee

4. Will you commit to eliminating the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) from utility bills? If so, what specific steps will you take to continue city services without having to replace the lost revenue by further burdening taxpayers?

I believe I would need to make sure there is no laws stating this fee has to be in there. If we can I would either commit to eliminating it or lowing the fee to not effect services.

Transparency

5. What specific steps will you take to ensure council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand?

I will make sure that when we are presenting or if administration is presenting that they/we come prepared and with all details. While asking for it to be presented in the least complicated business terms so everyone can understand it.

Business Climate

6. The business tax rate is currently 2.25 times the residential rate. Do you support lowering this rate? If so, what specific steps will you take to make it happen, all while protecting city finances and again, without further burdening residential taxpayers? How will you encourage new business?

If we as a city can get more businesses to commit to coming to Medicine Hat, I would be more than willing to lower the fees for them and our current businesses. I would suggest that we do a tax freeze for local businesses as well currently, to provide some support.

Safety & Homelessness

7. What specific steps will you take to address community safety, homelessness, and social disorder in Medicine Hat? How will you measure progress?

We as a city need to reach out to our local nonprofit partners and see what the needs are and how we can support them locally. We also need to reach out to the provincial and federal governments for support on this issue.

Professionalism

8. If elected, will you commit to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism befitting a city leader? What specific steps will you take to demonstrate this?

Yes, I believe that all citizens need to be respected and listened to no matter their view point. We as a council need to listen and learn from our citizens as they may see things differently and be able to make us see something we could have missed.

I will commit to bring a motion forward on having town hall meetings and public engagement.

Collaboration

9. Council is often divided. What specific steps will you take to work effectively with colleagues who have differing or opposing viewpoints?

I will always listen to my colleagues as they may be able to change my mind on information provided as they may be able to make me see a side of it, I didn't when

first looking at it. Also collaborating allows an idea to become even better or bigger. Not one person is going to fix this city, we all need to work together to succeed.

Personal Insight

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your candidacy for City Council?

I will commit to working hard for every single citizen and business in this city. I love Medicine Hat and want to see us grow and succeed! I will be a candidate you can and will be proud of. I will ask the tough questions on projects and provide an outside view point. I believe that my youthful approach will provide a voice and perspective for the younger generation in Medicine Hat as well.

Jay Hitchen

Candidate Questions for 2025

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Do you believe the City of Medicine Hat is currently in a fiscal surplus or deficit? What specific steps will you take to manage reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly?

Financials from 2023 budget saw us with a surplus, current fiscal year underway aims to balance the fiscal gap by 2028. Dwindling reserves will have a definite impact moving forward. By law, the budget must be balanced.

Taxes & Utilities

2. With rising property taxes and utility rates, what specific steps will you take to make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable?

Responsible budgeting and an audit of current staffing requirements. Identifying erroneous expense items and focusing on reasonable balanced growth.

Financial Literacy

3. How comfortable are you with reading financial statements and budgets? Can you give an example of how you've applied this skill, and what specific steps you would take on council to ensure sound budgeting?

Ten years with Bill Yuill under the Monarch Communications banner and fifteen years with The Jim Pattison Broadcast Group. Neither one of those tycoons spent money they didn't have to. My perview was the radio programming/operations budget for

CHAT and MY 96. We used zero based budgeting for many years, Pattison was focused on EBITDA during my time, quarterly updates were mandatory.

MCAF Fee

4. Will you commit to eliminating the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) from utility bills? If so, what specific steps will you take to continue city services without having to replace the lost revenue by further burdening taxpayers?

This is akin to Canada removing the GST. Initial calculations place the burden on the taxpayer at \$200/year or overall \$6,000,000.00 annually. That would require a 7% tax increase to maintain revenues. Any move away from that income would have to be a measured approach over a longer term to mitigate the overall effects. This issue requires significant study.

Transparency

5. What specific steps will you take to ensure council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand?

I'm not certain we need more transparency, it appears items available for the public have been presented. Matters involving personnel are protected for good reason. A mid-term progress report on the budget may be beneficial if within the guidelines set out in the MGA.

Business Climate

6. The business tax rate is currently 2.25 times the residential rate. Do you support lowering this rate? If so, what specific steps will you take to make it happen, all while protecting city finances and again, without further burdening residential taxpayers? How will you encourage new business?

I do not disagree that businesses face higher rates than residential and there are reasons for that. In the July 31, 2021 Medicine Hat News article we ranked #10 out of 18 communities for business tax rate, the middle of the pack. This is the result of efforts to bring down our tax rates initiated back in 2008 according to Dennis Egbert with the city. Is this reduction leading to more business activity? Numbers would likely say otherwise as we continue with our COVID recovery. A continuation of the downward tax on businesses to bring the ratio more in balance is the right move. Newer more relevant numbers are necessary but not easily attainable today. We have increased obligations from the province in this area as well which offers its own challenges.

Safety & Homelessness

7. What specific steps will you take to address community safety, homelessness, and social disorder in Medicine Hat? How will you measure progress?

Measurements are already in place and tracked by MH Community Housing. I believe strongly in the work they do and want to work closer with them to ensure they have the tools necessary. Homelessness is a tripod of responsibility with Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments each providing services and funding required. Every community is facing these challenges now - forming networks based on creating solutions is a positive step. I tendered the idea of a Hat Safe program, perhaps offering rebates on approved security devices. Such a program would have to weigh costs vs. benefits very seriously.

Professionalism

8. If elected, will you commit to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism befitting a city leader? What specific steps will you take to demonstrate this?

I've conducted myself in this manner my entire life with no plans to change now. Demonstrations are through actions which will continue to be part of my everyday life.

Collaboration

9. Council is often divided. What specific steps will you take to work effectively with colleagues who have differing or opposing viewpoints?

I've always taken time to know the people I work with so I understand how best to communicate with them. Everyone listens and learns differently so it's important to form these understandings and build relationships early. Everyone is entitled to their views and that must always be respected. Demeaning conversations or slurs are not acceptable and if approached that way I do not engage in a like minded fashion. It is also absolutely necessary to know what you're talking about and back it up with facts.

Personal Insight

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your candidacy for City Council?

My background in communications, marketing, coaching and business give me a very broad view of the city I've loved for more than thirty-five years now. For a comprehensive look at my platform and background my website is quite detailed.

<https://www.jayhitchen.ca>

Regards,

Jay Hitchen for Medicine Hat City Council

Robert Dumanowski:

Candidate Questions for 2025

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Do you believe the City of Medicine Hat is currently in a fiscal surplus or deficit? What specific steps will you take to manage reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly? **I believe it's important to understand the City's current financial position by reviewing reports and expert advice. It's important to separate current operating dollars from those set aside for future expenses (such as abandonment and reclamation costs, funds invested for utility maintenance or replacement, and invested funds that pay a dividend to the tax side to help mitigate against additional property tax increases). I am committed to managing reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly. This means making decisions that balance the needs of the community today with long-term financial stability. I will always focus on using taxpayer dollars wisely, planning carefully for future expenses, and ensuring transparency in all financial decisions so residents can have confidence that the City's money is being managed in the best interest of the community.**

Taxes & Utilities

2. With rising property taxes and utility rates, what specific steps will you take to make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable? **I understand that rising property taxes and utility rates can be a concern for residents and businesses. My approach is to focus on careful financial planning and efficient use of city resources to help keep costs manageable. I will support strategies that encourage economic growth, attract new businesses, and create local jobs, which can help offset costs for everyone. I also believe in exploring partnerships, incentives, and programs that make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable, while ensuring that essential services are maintained and the city remains financially responsible for the long-term.**

Financial Literacy

3. How comfortable are you with reading financial statements and budgets? Can you give an example of how you've applied this skill, and what specific steps you

would take on council to ensure sound budgeting? **I am comfortable reading financial statements and budgets, and I have applied this skill throughout my long service as a city councillor, where I have reviewed financial reports, monitored spending, and helped make decisions to ensure resources were used effectively. I would continue this careful approach by reviewing the City's financial statements, ensuring budgets align with community priorities, and focusing on transparency. I would ask questions when needed and make decisions based on clear financial information, helping to maintain the City's financial health while supporting responsible spending and long-term planning for the community.**

MCAF Fee

4. Will you commit to eliminating the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) from utility bills? If so, what specific steps will you take to continue city services without having to replace the lost revenue by further burdening taxpayers? **I understand that the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) is a concern for residents. While I am open to reviewing its purpose and impact, any decision would need to ensure that essential city services are maintained. I would commit to carefully examining the City's budget and looking for ways to improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary costs, and identify alternative revenue sources before making changes. My goal would be to make utility costs more manageable without shifting the burden to taxpayers, while continuing to provide reliable services. Decisions would be made transparently, based on financial data and community input.**

Transparency

5. What specific steps will you take to ensure council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand? **I am committed to ensuring council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand. I will support clear, accessible reporting of budgets, financial statements, and council decisions, using plain language whenever possible. Public engagement is key, so I will encourage opportunities for residents to provide input and ask questions. I will also advocate for regular updates, open meetings, and easy access to information online. My goal is to make it simple for residents to see how decisions are made, how money is spent, and to build trust through openness and accountability.**

Business Climate

6. The business tax rate is currently 2.25 times the residential rate. Do you support lowering this rate? If so, what specific steps will you take to make it happen, all while protecting city finances and again, without further burdening residential taxpayers? How will you encourage new business? **I understand that business taxes are a concern for local companies, and I am open to exploring ways to make the rate more competitive while protecting city finances. The tax ratio has slowly decreased over the past 5 years. Any additional changes would need careful analysis to ensure essential services are maintained and residential taxpayers are not further burdened. I would review the City's budget for efficiencies, consider incentives, and explore targeted programs to support businesses. Encouraging new business could include promoting economic growth initiatives, supporting local entrepreneurship, and fostering partnerships that create jobs. My approach would be balanced, transparent, and focused on long-term benefits for the community.**

Safety & Homelessness

7. What specific steps will you take to address community safety, homelessness, and social disorder in Medicine Hat? How will you measure progress? **Addressing community safety, homelessness, and social disorder requires a balanced, collaborative approach. I will work with local agencies, service providers, and law enforcement to identify priorities and develop practical solutions that meet community needs. This could include supporting programs that provide housing, mental health resources, and outreach services, while ensuring public spaces are safe and welcoming. Progress can be measured using clear indicators such as reduced incidents of crime, improved access to housing, and feedback from residents and service providers. My goal is to create a safer, healthier, and more inclusive community for everyone in Medicine Hat.**

Professionalism

8. If elected, will you commit to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism befitting a city leader? What specific steps will you take to demonstrate this? **Yes, I am committed to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with the professionalism expected of a city leader. I will ensure open and clear communication, listen carefully to concerns, and respond thoughtfully. I will participate in public meetings, community forums, and outreach opportunities, and encourage input from all voices in the community. Transparency and accountability will guide my actions, and I will**

make decisions based on facts, the City's priorities, and the best interest of residents. My goal is to build trust, foster positive relationships, and demonstrate leadership that reflects respect and professionalism at every level.

Collaboration

9. Council is often divided. What specific steps will you take to work effectively with colleagues who have differing or opposing viewpoints? **I understand that council members will have differing viewpoints, and I am committed to working collaboratively and respectfully with all colleagues. I will listen carefully, seek to understand alternative perspectives, and focus on shared goals that benefit the community. Open communication, patience, and compromise are key to finding solutions that work for everyone. I will base discussions on facts, evidence, and the City's priorities, rather than personal differences. My goal is to build consensus where possible, foster a positive working environment, and ensure that council decisions are made thoughtfully, professionally, and in the best interest of Medicine Hat residents.**

Personal Insight

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your candidacy for City Council? **Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questionnaire. I am committed to serving the residents of Medicine Hat with experience, dedication, and a focus on practical solutions. My long service on council has given me a strong understanding of our community's needs, finances, and priorities. If I am privileged to be re-elected, I will continue to advocate for responsible budgeting, transparent decision-making, and policies that support local businesses, families, and community growth. I value open communication, listening to residents, and working collaboratively to address challenges. My goal is to help ensure Medicine Hat remains a safe, vibrant, and thriving community for everyone, now and into the future**

Bill Cocks:

1. The CMH is in a surplus situation. The City has reserves and, by law, cannot run a deficit. Budgets are reviewed annually but roll over a multi-year cycle. It is a balancing act with pressures coming on all sides.
2. Living and doing business in Medicine Hat is more affordable than in most other communities. I don't believe we have to be the cheapest city to live in, in order to attract more people and businesses. It is our quality of life that is the promotional asset we should use to attract growth.

3. I am a retired lawyer and my education has included some learning about financial statements. I'm also an elder of my church, St. John's Presbyterian, and I have been closely involved in preparing annual budgets for the congregation. Also, and most importantly, I have 13 years of prior service on our City Council. Staff prepare the City's budgets and present them to Council for adoption or review on an annual basis. I have the intelligence and skills required for this job.
4. The Utilities provided by the CMH must operate in the black. If you eliminate the MCAF, the lost revenue will have to be included in commodity rates. Utilities should not be subsidized by taxes. The ratepayers (customers of the utilities) must pay their own freight.
5. KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid. MCAF may be a case in point. In order to generate revenue, Council was encouraged to add a fee that ratepayers in other communities pay, municipal consent & access costs. Municipalities charge MCAF to utility providers in order for them to gain access to their market. This is one way for the municipality to generate revenue to help keep taxes down. These costs then get passed on to the customer. In Medicine Hat, the City owns the utilities and does not need to give itself "consent and access" to its customers. The question lingers: should Medicine Hatters enjoy cheaper utilities as a result? The utilities pay a dividend to the City. It's just one more way of balancing our budget without raising taxes.
6. Businesses are usually taxed at a higher rate than residential property owners. Rightly or wrongly, the perception has always been that businesses can deduct their taxes from their income for income tax purposes so they can therefore afford to pay more in property taxes. Income redistribution is built into our taxing philosophy in Canada. Do you agree with that or not? I do. And with municipalities, the money has to come from somewhere because, by law, we cannot operate at a deficit. It's simple - if you reduce property tax rates for businesses you will have to make up the difference by taxing residents at a higher rate or by reducing services. Again, a balancing act.
7. I, as one councillor, cannot do anything by myself. The statistics show that Medicine Hat is a very safe community to live in and has a low crime rate. That is not much comfort to someone who has had their car, garage or home broken into by a homeless drug addict. The current situation, and Medicine Hat is far from alone in dealing with this, is much worse than it has been in years past. The causes are multiple and complex and the solutions will not be simple. CMH was acknowledged to be the first city in Canada to end homelessness. This was some years ago but a philosophy of "housing first" proved to be the main tool in our kit. In the years since, the number of homeless and addicts has increased, and the system has been swamped. We need to apply resources to return to a

situation where the homeless are identified and got off the streets in a timely manner. Progress will be measured in declining crime rates and rising residential accommodation.

8. "All I ever really needed to know, I learned in kindergarten." Politeness, respectfulness, honesty are values I learned early and that I have always applied in my professional legal career, as a civic politician, and in my personal dealings with family, neighbours and friends. That will *never* change for me, and I will expect nothing less from staff, the mayor and my fellow councillors.
9. Collaboration is fundamental to the success of the Council about to be elected. Reading the Investigative Report prepared for the Minister of Municipal Affairs gives testament to the fact that Mayor Clark, the Council and CAO Mitchell did not play well together in the sandbox which they shared. All need to be held accountable and so far, I have not seen evidence that any have acknowledged this. This is the most important reason that I am seeking to return as a City Councillor. There will always be decisions to be made and actions to be taken but councillors, the mayor *and* administration need to listen carefully and communicate directly. Building a team is job one after we are sworn in.

Cheryl Phaff

Hi,

Here are my responses.

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Do you believe the City of Medicine Hat is currently in a fiscal surplus or deficit? What specific steps will you take to manage reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly?

My number one priority is fiscal responsibility, and Medicine Hat currently spends more than it brings in every year, which means we are in a deficit. To manage reserves we need taking a hard look at the budget, finding efficiencies, and protecting front line services while we tighten the back office. We can do this with disciplined budgeting, better procurement, and hard looks at pet projects. If the project will make money for the city, let's do it. If it won't, let's not. Keep ideology out of fiscal decisions.

Taxes & Utilities

2. With rising property taxes and utility rates, what specific steps will you take to make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable?

Families and small businesses are stretched. Back to back 5.6% increases add up fast, and that's on top of rising costs for everything else. My top priority is a three year municipal tax freeze. That means finding efficiencies and protecting front line services while we tighten the back office. We can do this with disciplined budgeting, better procurement, and hard looks at pet projects. One such pet project was the Division Ave narrowing, which cost over \$6 million dollars! Simply by not doing that project we could have eliminated more than one year of property tax increases. So to afford my tax freeze I would protect front line services while eliminating expensive, useless projects. Why fix something that isn't broken?

Financial Literacy

3. How comfortable are you with reading financial statements and budgets? Can you give an example of how you've applied this skill, and what specific steps you would take on council to ensure sound budgeting?

I am extremely comfortable reading financial statements. I am a business owner with an MBA, and have to prepare financial statements for my company. I was also previously on the Provincial Board of Directors for the Wildrose Party, where we had to discuss and approve party budgets and finances. On council I would looking at the budget to ensure we are getting our fiscal house in order, which includes assessing any new projects from a profit based lens.

MCAF Fee

4. Will you commit to eliminating the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) from utility bills? If so, what specific steps will you take to continue city services without having to replace the lost revenue by further burdening taxpayers?

The priority is affordability and stability, so the fee will be assessed in context of overall utility rates, infrastructure needs, and the city's budget. That review should consider options like capping, restructuring, phasing out, or maintaining the fee, alongside efficiency gains and growth that reduce pressure on bills and taxes. Residents deserve straightforward bills and a utility that stays reliable and cost competitive. Any adjustment to MCAF should come with a full picture: what changes, what it costs, and how the city keeps services funded before decisions are made.

Transparency

5. What specific steps will you take to ensure council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand?

Transparency is essential to public trust. The best way to build that trust is to give residents information that's clear, timely, and useful without creating bureaucratic busywork that buries people in PDFs. A practical approach is to publish usable, open datasets on key topics like permits, procurement, capital projects, budgets, and service metrics so community groups, media, and residents can analyze them independently. Pair that with simple, plain language summaries for major decisions like what changed, why it matters, what it costs, and how success will be measured. Consistency matters more than volume: focus on the data people need most, keep it up to date, and avoid jargon. When residents can see the numbers and connect them to outcomes, confidence in council decisions grows because people can check the work themselves.

Business Climate

6. The business tax rate is currently 2.25 times the residential rate. Do you support lowering this rate? If so, what specific steps will you take to make it happen, all while protecting city finances and again, without further burdening residential taxpayers? How will you encourage new business?

The goal is competitive total costs, predictable rules, and faster approvals so companies can plan, invest, and hire. The path forward is disciplined spending, modern procurement, and prioritizing infrastructure that unlocks growth, rather than shifting burdens between classes of taxpayers. At the same time, accelerate assessment growth by pre permitting key sites, setting guaranteed permitting timelines, and offering a real service that gets projects to “yes” faster. With a stronger tax base and a tighter cost structure, the ratio can be reviewed annually in the budget, in light of real progress.

Safety & Homelessness

7. What specific steps will you take to address community safety, homelessness, and social disorder in Medicine Hat? How will you measure progress?

Safety and compassion must work together. Here’s the plan. Step one: restore law and order so parks, streets, and downtown feel safe again. That means coordinated enforcement and swift responses. Step two: scale affordable housing development—streamline permitting and work with property builders to deliver more affordable units. Step three: economic development—more jobs and training that help people exit homelessness for good. Safety today, stability tomorrow, opportunity for the long run. We don’t have to choose between compassion and consequences; we need both, working together. With clear goals and transparent reporting, Medicine Hat can reduce disorder, and get more people off the street.

Professionalism

8. If elected, will you commit to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism befitting a city leader? What specific steps will you take to demonstrate this?

I'm running to bring Sanity back to City Hall. Professionalism starts with the process: well run agendas, clear rules of order, and disciplined timekeeping so everyone is heard and decisions stay focused on facts, costs, and outcomes. Set expectations up front: disagree on ideas, not people; declare conflicts; recuse when appropriate; and explain votes in plain language. Maintain a calm, constructive presence in public and online—no sarcasm, no pile ons, no score settling. When tempers rise, de-escalate and return to shared goals. If a mistake happens, own it, correct it, and document the fix. Model the behavior expected across the organization: punctual, prepared, fair, and steady. That's how trust is earned, culture improves, and council gets real work done.

Collaboration

9. Council is often divided. What specific steps will you take to work effectively with colleagues who have differing or opposing viewpoints?

Collaboration starts before the cameras turn on. Begin with early, informal briefings to map shared goals and constraints, so disagreements narrow to specific options, not values. Invite amendments that improve proposals and be willing to adopt good ideas, regardless of whose they are. Keep disagreements on policy, not people and after a vote, move on together. When tempers rise, return to first principles: fiscal responsibility, safety, service quality, and long term value. The purpose of council is to govern Medicine Hat and make sensible decisions for the residents, not infighting and viral dysfunction.

Personal Insight

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your candidacy for City Council?

My candidacy is about practical leadership. As a former farm kid I learned planning, hard work, and living within limits. Running a business added lessons in cash flow, deadlines, and navigating red tape without losing momentum. Political experience as a provincial director with the Wildrose Party provided insight into how decisions are really made—and how to build coalitions that deliver results. Medicine Hat has every reason to win: location, energy, land, and quality of life. What's missing is focus. My plan is straightforward: grow the economy, make building easier, fix the basics, and stop funding projects that don't deliver value. Keep taxes stable by cutting waste and expanding the tax base. Treat residents and colleagues with respect, even in disagreement. Make decisions based on data and outcomes, not ideology. The promise is steady hands, common sense, and clear priorities—work that restores trust and gets Medicine Hat moving forward

Ron Fedoruk:

Candidate Questions for 2025

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Do you believe the City of Medicine Hat is currently in a fiscal surplus or deficit? What specific steps will you take to manage reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly?
YES, mid 2025...operating deficit of 28 million.
Request Quarterly Reporting and take a position on council that RESERVES cannot be used for ongoing operations.

Any surpluses, or at least a major percentage of surpluses can be directed at infrastructure projects only.

Debt policy can be developed, aligned closely primarily with major infrastructure projects.

Taxes & Utilities

2. With rising property taxes and utility rates, what specific steps will you take to make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable?

This is my number 1 priority.

Identify inefficiencies in city departments that can be improved upon or streamlined.

City budgets must be reviewed and justified.

The tax base can be expanded once new businesses and appropriate industries are brought to Medicine Hat.

Develop affordable housing partnerships with both non-profits and developers.

Financial Literacy

3. How comfortable are you with reading financial statements and budgets? Can you give an example of how you've applied this skill, and what specific steps you would take on council to ensure sound budgeting?

Alberta Sunflower Seeds Ltd. was recognized in the Arthur Andersen "Canada's 50 Best Managed Private Companies" program in 1994. I was a partner with the owner of Alberta Sunflower Seeds Ltd. for over 7 years with the sister company, Spitz Sales Inc. With Spitz Sales Inc., I was involved with mostly marketing, sales, and logistics for both Canada and the USA. I understand financial statements and budgeting, and also owned and operated eleven restaurants in Brooks, Redcliff, and Medicine Hat, over a 30-year span. In addition, I also owned and operated my Taxi business for 14 years, as well as a vending company and two small grocery stores. I still consider myself as a 'student' of accounting, but keen to learn more.

MCAF Fee

4. Will you commit to eliminating the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) from utility bills? If so, what specific steps will you take to continue city services without having to replace the lost revenue by further burdening taxpayers?

Yes. It should be phased out.

The city can be run more efficiently by cutting waste and not services.
Energy profits can offset some or all of these fees.
As we attract new industries, we can grow our business tax base, and redirect those funds towards offsetting the MCAF.

Transparency

5. What specific steps will you take to ensure council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand?

Have audited reports made available to the public.
Medicine Hat residents should know how their money is spent.
Do a year-to-year financial side by side comparison but simplified for lay persons to comprehend and follow...and to make for easy to ask questions.

Business Climate

6. The business tax rate is currently 2.25 times the residential rate. Do you support lowering this rate? If so, what specific steps will you take to make it happen, all while protecting city finances and again, without further burdening residential taxpayers? How will you encourage new business?

Medicine Hat businesses pay about 2.1x the residential rate, compared to 1.5x in Lethbridge. Here we are comparing 'apples to apples' but what are the significant/specific factors that come into play? Is Lethbridge, for example, a better steward of its' finances or were fewer initiatives at play that allows Lethbridge to manage lower business tax rates. In other words, can lessons be learned by comparing and contrasting similar sizes municipalities?

Council could set goals of lowering business tax rate for each of the next 4 years.

Safety & Homelessness

7. What specific steps will you take to address community safety, homelessness, and social disorder in Medicine Hat? How will you measure progress?

Community Safety:

I would support the establishment of 2 sub police stations; one where the sea cans were established, and another on North Railway near the walk underpass.

These police sub stations, would be 400-600 sq feet, heated and airconditioned, with washroom for the 6-8 rotating foot/bicycling officers on 24-hour patrol.

Downtown and flats neighbourhood can be patrolled directly from these 24 hour police sub stations. Downtown businesses and neighbourhoods would instantly benefit from the permanent presence of these sub stations and patrolling officers...both in real concrete terms and psychologically.

A real significant bonus is the actual cost to the taxpayer. It would be negligible, aside from moving a small modular shelter or trailer to these two sites, there is very little additional costs. Patrolling officers would not be extra hires but would replace the police who would otherwise be patrolling in vehicles.

Homelessness: I would implement a community Call Line, whereby citizens who would like to have someone come to their residence, to do various outside home jobs (weeding and lawn care, snow shoveling, fence painting, moving, etc) would call a day in advance and make their request to a community care worker.

The care worker, having vetted homeless people for willingness to do work in the community, safety concerns, abilities, etc., would accompany the homeless volunteer or volunteers to the resident requesting help (via free bus day pass), supervise and confirm that the work was completed to satisfaction, and that payment for said work was made directly to the homeless person.

After completing X number of work jobs/projects in the community, a plan for transition to more permanent residence could be worked out.

The advantages of the city promoting a community Call Line, getting people that are capable of working into a working situation, getting the community the help it is requesting and at the same time helping homeless people to get their lives back on track, would be extremely positive and easily measured.

This would be a very much 'hand up' instead of a 'hand out' project.

I would support new bylaws and the enforcing of vagrancy laws that are already in place. For those who are experiencing mental health issues, I would support any and all efforts regarding treatment and care. For those who are in need of shelter, intervention programs which include some form of shelter and close case worker follow up. This would involve utilizing and expanding existing outreach services, not necessarily creating new ones.

Regarding social disorder, I would encourage council and police commission to establish a small, spartan, police 'substation' somewhere in the downtown core, where police patrols could emulate from and provide 24-hour downtown coverage.

Measurement would be by crime statistics and downtown homeless counts/progress tracking.

Professionalism

8. If elected, will you commit to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism befitting a city leader? What specific steps will you take to demonstrate this?

Yes.

Philosophy: Live. Listen. Learn. Lead.

Very important to be accessible, accountable, and approachable.

Residents, more than anything, when experiencing an issue or problem that is unique to them, want your attention. That is the most important matter to them...it must be treated as such, and subsequently, genuine attention and where possible, help in solving the issue is central to a councilor's role.

Collaboration

9. Council is often divided. What specific steps will you take to work effectively with colleagues who have differing or opposing viewpoints?

I have no ego that would interfere with being able to work with fellow council members.

I have a 'fix and go' work/relationship mindset.

This should be top of mind: Regardless of differing viewpoints, my goal and objective should be to find common ground and solutions with my colleagues that serve the people of Medicine Hat. Period.

Personal Insight

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your candidacy for City Council?

At present the future tasks facing the new city council are many and varied. The present council has struggled.

I belong in struggling situations.

I believe that my background, one that has been diverse indeed, will be most beneficial should I be fortunate to serve the City of Medicine Hat.

I would hope to be able to draw on my many and varied past life experiences to help carry out my duties should I be elected to council.

Some of my life experiences include:

Air Cadets Edmonton 570 squadron
University of Alberta, Bachelor of Education Degree
Counselor, Bon Accord Boys Ranch
Social Worker Edmonton Social Services
Social Worker Alberta Social Services (Medicine Hat)
Owner/Operator 11 Restaurants (Brooks, Redcliff, Medicine Hat)
Owner/Operator Taxi Business
Owner of 2 Grocery stores (Brooks, Medicine Hat)
Owner Greebs Amusements and Vending
Co-Owner Spitz Sales Inc.
Board of Directors Spitz Sales Inc.
National Market Manager Spitz Sales Inc.
Marketed a Patented Nutraceutical (under direction of John Molson III) (Overseas)
Marketed an EPA Registered product for Gas, Diesel, Bio-Diesel, Ethanol vehicles, for reduction of CO, Nox, Particulate matter, emissions. (Overseas)
Owner of Sway Beds International Inc. (Metal Sway Bed frames, manufactured in Medicine Hat)
Student of Taekwondo (martial arts)
Board of Directors Medicine Hat Taekwondo Youth Foundation

Dan Reynish:

Candidate Questions for 2025

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Do you believe the City of Medicine Hat is currently in a fiscal surplus or deficit? What specific steps will you take to manage reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly?

ANSWER - The City of Medicine Hat is currently in a budget gap as it has had to draw from its reserves to balance the operating budget, due in part to revenue shortfalls from the COVID-19 pandemic. However the 2025-2026 budget is hoping to close that gap by 2028. Every family in Medicine Hat is trying to do more with less these days. The cost of living continues to go up, yet the amount of money that we're all being paid doesn't seem to increase. City Council may have to look to businesses that rely on it to start doing more with less as well, and work harder to make each dollar go as far as possible. That could be as simple as turning off the lights when rooms are not in use. All that said, the next City Council needs to find ways to increase the money coming in through business taxation and keeping costs low, and that would be something I focus on if I'm elected.

Taxes & Utilities

2. With rising property taxes and utility rates, what specific steps will you take to make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable?

ANSWER - The City needs to do more to make it easier and more affordable to do business in Medicine Hat. Business fees are too high and permits and licences take far too long to get approved. I've been told that one specialty shop almost ran through their start-up funding before their licence was approved. I will work tirelessly to make opening and running a business in Medicine Hat easier, through existing incentives and trying to cut through the existing red tape that is getting in the way.

Financial Literacy

3. How comfortable are you with reading financial statements and budgets? Can you give an example of how you've applied this skill, and what specific steps you would take on council to ensure sound budgeting?

ANSWER - I am a previous Provincial Director for the Terry Fox Foundation in Saskatchewan. During my time working on behalf of Terry Fox it was my responsibility to read financial statements and budgets. We raised over \$1.5 million dollars for cancer research and the books always needed to be balanced to the pledge sheets and donation slips. I will use my experience with The Foundation to strengthen Medicine Hat's foundation.

MCAF Fee

4. Will you commit to eliminating the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) from utility bills? If so, what specific steps will you take to continue city services without having to replace the lost revenue by further burdening taxpayers?

ANSWER - If the MCAF were removed, the City would then need to find that revenue elsewhere. Potentially through increased property taxes. No one wants to pay more property taxes. No one wants to pay any more taxes at all! The elimination of the MCAF is something that needs to be discussed further with residents. The city counts on the revenue from the MCAF, but if people are unhappy with it then the city needs to get rid of it.

Transparency

5. What specific steps will you take to ensure council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand?

ANSWER - You can't be fully transparent and hold a public office. There will be times that you simply cannot say why you're meeting behind closed doors, for legal reasons or otherwise. Instead, I'm looking to continue with the trust that I have built up with the people of Medicine Hat over the last seven years. I will always explain as much as I can about what is going on, and you'll know I'm always telling the truth. And I will explain it simply and easily, for everyone to understand, as I've done for the last seven years.

Business Climate

6. The business tax rate is currently 2.25 times the residential rate. Do you support lowering this rate? If so, what specific steps will you take to make it happen, all while protecting city finances and again, without further burdening residential taxpayers? How will you encourage new business?

ANSWER - I support lowering all tax rates...but then, where does the city revenue come from? The people of Medicine Hat would like a pool in the southern part of the city. But who's going to pay for it? The city needs to bring more businesses here and then, with more people doing business in our city, the cost of doing business can go down for them all. Medicine Hat is uniquely located on the Trans-Canada Highway and the Crowsnest Highway. We have a fairly well-balanced weather climate. The City offers tax incentives to businesses. And the people of Medicine Hat are some of the best in Canada. It's not always easy to convince people to bring their company to a city, but the members of City Council need to approach more businesses and invite them to come and see what we have to offer. That may involve cold-calling company presidents and selling them on our city. The Mayor and Council need to spend time selling the community to attract more investment. You can always make a deal sweeter through incentives, tax credits, grants and specialized programs, but first you have to convince someone to consider locating their business in Medicine Hat.

Safety & Homelessness

7. What specific steps will you take to address community safety, homelessness, and social disorder in Medicine Hat? How will you measure progress?

ANSWER - It is truly my belief that anyone who is homeless that truly wants help in Medicine Hat and area can get help. There are some great people at amazing agencies - such as the Medicine Hat Community Housing Association - doing the difficult work of helping people. But there are people out there who just don't want help or just can't access the help that's available, for one reason or another. That said, the City of Medicine Hat needs to do more to offer them assistance as well. I don't have all the answers, but the mental health of the people of Medicine Hat will be a priority of mine if I'm elected. As far as measuring progress, if the number of people sleeping in our parks goes down and the number of petty crimes reported goes down, we'll know we're doing right by the people of Medicine Hat.

Professionalism

8. If elected, will you commit to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism befitting a city leader? What specific steps will you take to demonstrate this?

ANSWER - I have never treated anyone in Medicine Hat with anything less than respect. I have been stopped in grocery stores, restaurants, the movie theatre and even public washrooms. I have treated every person respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism. That will never change. I will continue to demonstrate the responsibility I feel being a public figure by talking to everyone and anyone who stops me, calls me or emails me. And I will pose for a picture with anyone who asks, whether the picture is for them or their parents.

Collaboration

9. Council is often divided. What specific steps will you take to work effectively with colleagues who have differing or opposing viewpoints?

ANSWER - It is true that you don't always have to like everyone you work with. But you do have to respect the people who you're working with. I will work effectively with my colleagues because I will always respect them and their point of view. Politics is about working together for the benefit of something bigger, and that will never be lost on me.

Personal Insight

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your candidacy for City Council?

ANSWER - My campaign is lead by a belief that the people of Medicine Hat deserve to be seen and heard. What do you want? What would you like to see? Those are questions I've been asking. I also believe in keeping the local economy strong by supporting good jobs and inviting new economic development. Keeping utilities publicly owned with fair taxes. Increasing programs and recreational opportunities for youth and seniors. And at all times I will work to promote an inclusive, accessible community for all to grow, enjoy and thrive in. Because, I believe in Medicine Hat!!-

Brock Hale:

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Do you believe the City of Medicine Hat is currently in a fiscal surplus or deficit? What specific steps will you take to manage reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly?

I love Math (I did a Math major) and I teach Junior High School Math. I think we can look at City spending and find ways to save money. I think every step of the way we

have to ask ourselves, Can we afford this? Do the residents want this? Does it make sense financially? And then use all the information available to use to make the best decision we can.

Taxes & Utilities

2. With rising property taxes and utility rates, what specific steps will you take to make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable?

As the price of living goes up, I think it'll be increasingly more important that the City of Medicine Hat spend tax money, properly and efficiently. I think we need to look at our priorities and make sure the proper allocation of our money is being used for the things we value most. I think we can reduce "Red Tape" in Medicine Hat, I think we can have more fair taxes and I think we can find ways to ease the financial burden that is an increasing concern for so many Hatters.

Financial Literacy

3. How comfortable are you with reading financial statements and budgets? Can you give an example of how you've applied this skill, and what specific steps you would take on council to ensure sound budgeting?

I like numbers and I like Math so I am not worried about reading financial statements and budgets. I like to be thorough and I like to ensure I understand things to the best of my ability. I'm also not afraid to ask questions of those that know more than me. In some of these areas I will need to lean on other more experienced councillors or those that have more business experience and I will do my homework and learn as much as I can, as quickly as I can.

MCAF Fee

4. Will you commit to eliminating the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) from utility bills? If so, what specific steps will you take to continue city services without having to replace the lost revenue by further burdening taxpayers?

I think this is something that needs looking into. I would love to find a way to eliminate these fees without having to turn around and charge the residents in some other way. I think this can be done and I plan to learn more about it and look into it, if elected.

Transparency

5. What specific steps will you take to ensure council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand?

I think it'll be important to have plain-language reporting, financial summaries that are easy to read, and less closed council discussions. I think residents deserve to

know not only what decisions are made, but why they are made and how much money is being spent on what.

Business Climate

6. The business tax rate is currently 2.25 times the residential rate. Do you support lowering this rate? If so, what specific steps will you take to make it happen, all while protecting city finances and again, without further burdening residential taxpayers? How will you encourage new business?

Again, I think this is something that needs to be reviewed. We talk about ways to incentivise business to come to Medicine Hat, maybe this is one thing we can do. Steps like this can only be taken if there are strong plans in place on how we will take care of our money and ensure we are not simply going to turn around and charge residents with increased taxes, for example.

Safety & Homelessness

7. What specific steps will you take to address community safety, homelessness, and social disorder in Medicine Hat? How will you measure progress?

This is a very tricky question that has a lot of different and delicate parts to it. First of all, no matter what we do, we need to be compassionate and understanding. Solving a problem like this will take work and collaboration from a lot of different parties. I plan to work with law enforcement, social services, addiction recovery programs, mental health supports and more to find the best solution we can to our City's struggle with homelessness.

Professionalism

8. If elected, will you commit to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism befitting a city leader? What specific steps will you take to demonstrate this?

This is what I believe to be one of my strengths. I love people, I love getting to know them and hearing their stories. For sure I will be in the public and talking with people and hearing their frustrations. Another one of my strengths is to be able to do all this while remaining very professional, calm and positive. This is one part of the job I would be most excited for; to work with, get to know, represent and serve the people of Medicine Hat.

Collaboration

9. Council is often divided. What specific steps will you take to work effectively with colleagues who have differing or opposing viewpoints?

Again, this is something that I think I am able to do quite well. I have no problem if people have differing opinions. In fact, I think it's great and ideal for all sides of an argument to be brought forward. Where we need to be careful is how we treat each other, even if we don't see eye-to-eye. Again, I think this is something I can do very well. Help bring people together, bring ideas together and move forward in a positive direction.

Personal Insight

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your candidacy for City Council?

As a husband and father of a young family I feel like I bring a different and valuable perspective to council. As a teacher, coach, ref and volunteer I bring with me lots of experience and valuable ideas. I look forward to potentially serving the people of Medicine Hat

Kaleb Orge:

Candidate Questions for 2025

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Do you believe the City of Medicine Hat is currently in a fiscal surplus or deficit? What specific steps will you take to manage reserves, surpluses, and debt responsibly?

According to page 51 of the 2024 Financial Report, the operations budget for the city of Medicine Hat is currently running a deficit of over \$43 million. My understanding of page 36 of the 2025-2026 budget is that Medicine Hat as a whole is projected to spend in excess of \$115 million more than it takes in by 2034 -- which amounts to ~15% of our total available financial reserves of \$753,778,000 over the next decade. These "reserves", by the way, also include the sale of investments and the issuance of new municipal debt.

If this trend continues uninterrupted, a simple back-of-the-envelope calculation indicates Medicine Hat will go bankrupt less than 63 years from now. The 3-year property tax freeze proposed by Drew Barnes will, by itself, shorten that to 58 years if the proposed additional \$15 million shortfall becomes permanent.

Loading up Medicine Hat with debt concerns me greatly as debt maintenance also creates a decades-long drain on city revenues and our ability to provide services.

Many of the other candidates are preaching some manner or other of "managing the decline". I would much rather confront problem head-on before the hole gets too deep to crawl out of. Anyone whose genuine position on the prospect of Medicine Hat going bankrupt in 40-60 years is "Well *I'll* be dead by then" need read no further. There are at least a dozen cowards running in this election who are better aligned with such a marrow-sucking agenda.

The specific steps I would take to manage the city's reserves responsibly for the next four years are:

- 1) To hold to the city's current 10-year budgetary plan as it already includes at least some corrective actions.
- 2) Had I been in office four years ago, I would not have approved the hand-out to the Curling Club nor the construction of a South Side Rec center. The Curling Club I would have refused outright and I would have approved restoring existing facilities wherever possible specifically *because* it provides redundancies not possible with a single facility while also giving future Councils the ability to selectively scale back the number of facilities should that prove financially necessary.
- 3) I am open to considering up a one-year freeze on property tax *and* utility rate increases alongside the most exhaustive public-awareness campaign in Medicine Hat's history that Hatters would need to take full advantage of said year (presumably 2027) to pay down as much personal and business debt as possible as I would also insist on the damage done to the city budget due to inflation be restored (with appropriate interest) over the subsequent 3 years.
- 4) Lastly, I would like to loosen the metaphorical chains on Rochelle Pancoast and let her run COMCO like she needs to in order to properly address our roughly half-billion dollars of capital reinvestment. The entire brouhaha over selling our utility or creating an MCC is the result of generations of City Councils who cannot wear both their "municipal politician" hat and their "board member of an energy company" hat.

I am fully aware that if this leads to higher utility rates it could cause some businesses to struggle and that it *will* cause increased food-bank use. Therefore, I make the following pledge:

I will ensure that Medicine Hat continues to maintain a "best of market approach" while also upholding Premier Smith's campaign promise of a 13.5 cent per kilowatt-hour upper cap on the price of electricity as long as she is in office -- even if no other utilities provider in the province does.

Taxes & Utilities

2. With rising property taxes and utility rates, what specific steps will you take to make living and doing business in Medicine Hat more affordable?

It sounds like this question is asking me for a discount. Here's a hard pill to swallow -- the more debt a city takes on, the more expensive city operations get due to interest payments. City costs also rise with inflation the same as for everyone else. Medicine Hat has already gone through eight years of budget review under Councillor Hirsh, among others. I'm open to every cost-savings, time-savings, and efficienct that can still be found, but I'm **strongly** disinclined to making the hole in the municipal budget worse. Give me a quantifiable return on investment or go away.

Financial Literacy

3. How comfortable are you with reading financial statements and budgets? Can you give an example of how you've applied this skill, and what specific steps you would take on council to ensure sound budgeting?

I live on a fixed income of \$22,000 a year, have no personal debt and have managed to put over \$10,000 into GICs since 2019.

Now let me tell you that I do for fun.

Anyone who thinks gamers don't have useful resource-management experience has never played Hearts of Iron. In HOI4 players assume the role of the leader of a nation, train entire national armies down to the company level, organize research and national budgets, and fight a territory-by-territory simulation of the Second World

War to secure key strategic resources while also having to manage the domestic economy and public opinion.

Moving from a GUI back to spreadsheets is likely to be the biggest part of the adjustment.

If you're also a gamer and would like to test my skills, please reach out.

MCAF Fee

4. Will you commit to eliminating the Municipal Consent & Access Fee (MCAF) from utility bills? If so, what specific steps will you take to continue city services without having to replace the lost revenue by further burdening taxpayers?

Talk about leading questions. It's a zero sum game. You may as well go all the way and *name* the city employees you want put up against the wall so you can save \$20 per month. Disgusting.

As I mentioned in the previous question, I am used to living on less than \$600 per month after rent, phone, internet and utilities. In order to maintain perspective, I'm planning on putting everything I make over \$22,000 into a blind trust during my term on Council. I don't know where the rest of the \$16 million is supposed to come from, but I'm both willing and able to start by voting to reduce Council's wages by as much as \$30,000 per year on day 1 and give you 38 cents per month directly out of Council's pocket.

Transparency

5. What specific steps will you take to ensure council decisions and city finances are transparent and easy for the public to understand?

I'm going to be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement and Administration will be the one teaching me what's "sensitive corporate information" and what's not. I can pass a direction to Administration to answer requests for information in a timely manner, and I can answer every question put to me where an answer would not violate the Municipal Government Act. But I lack the supernatural power to make

complex problems that are difficult to understand into short, snappy answers without the obfuscation of metaphor.

I can help you find ducks, not bigfoot.

Business Climate

6. The business tax rate is currently 2.25 times the residential rate. Do you support lowering this rate? If so, what specific steps will you take to make it happen, all while protecting city finances and again, without further burdening residential taxpayers? How will you encourage new business?

This is literally what we have Rochelle Pancoast for.

Safety & Homelessness

7. What specific steps will you take to address community safety, homelessness, and social disorder in Medicine Hat? How will you measure progress?

A Councillor can only hire the CAO and vote on the proposals and bylaws which come before them.

The Root Cellar is feeding 4,000 people every month and has fed 33,533 different individuals in the last year. That includes 11,887 children.

Every year the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society does a Point-in-Time count of the homeless people in Medicine Hat. In 2024, that number was 104. The police and the courts also record the number of arrests and criminal convictions.

If the numbers go down, we're measurably doing something right. If the numbers go up, more work needs to be done. If the numbers go down and the number of complaints keeps going up anyway, let's grab a coffee and chat.

I'm smart enough to stay out of the way of the people fighting the battle every day until they ask for help. And then I'll go to the public to tell you what the need is so you can be in the gallery when Council makes its decision.

Professionalism

8. If elected, will you commit to engaging with residents respectfully, with integrity, and with professionalism befitting a city leader? What specific steps will you take to demonstrate this?

Yes. I also intend to engage with the public with honesty and good humour. Unfortunately, it has already been my experience that some individuals consider "humour" and "professionalism" mutually exclusive.

As a professional humourist, I find this hilarious.

Respectfully.

Collaboration

9. Council is often divided. What specific steps will you take to work effectively with colleagues who have differing or opposing viewpoints?

Something that strikes me as missing from this most recent Council has been friendly competition. Without an outlet, things like sniping and backbiting and trying to "score points" starts to infiltrate and derail the actual work being done.

Council has enough public events to go to that we can certainly squash our beef competing against each other for charity or with a quick footrace like in Harry Veiner's day.

With regard to one beef in particular, I respect Mayor Clark's right to eat meals in private whenever she chooses. I was genuinely surprised this was an issue, I have never felt entitled to my coworkers' off-the-clock hours even though I personally rarely decline social invitations.

As far as when divided votes happen, as the inevitably will, disagreement doesn't have to boil over. When a vote is done, its done.

Personal Insight

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your candidacy for City Council?

I urge everyone in Medicine Hat to use every vote they have available on their ballot in this election. With such a wide field of candidates, its much more likely than usual that unlikely wins can happen and that a "minority rule" can be imposed by sweeping a slate of candidates into office. In order to do its job, Council needs to represent everyone. If you want your voice heard this election, you need to use all of it.