



and the residents of the City.

## **Bill Cocks**

electbill	cocks@gmail.com
3.Campaig	n Website
4.Campaig	n Social Media
	ok - Bill Cocks - Councillor for the City of Medicine Hat
5.Who are	you and why should I vote for you?
	etired lawyer, a life-long resident of the City who <mark>has demonst</mark> rated <mark>dedication, i</mark> ntegrity and I that I am future focused in the best interests of Medicine Hayou want to make decisions about the City on yo <mark>ur behalf? I</mark> have the qualifications that are meaningful.
6.What Go Councill	vernance, Board, Council, Community o <mark>r Committee experien</mark> ce do you have in your past that would make you a good or?
John's F	Councillor 1998-2007, 2013-2017 (13 years). I am currently the president of CARO (Canadians Reaching Out to the children of the world), an elder of St. Presbyterian Church where I review annual budgets of the congregation. In the past, I have been the President of the local Burns Society, a board member amunity Foundation, REDI Enterprises when it was the Med Hat Rehab. Society.
7.What is y	our professional/work background & how do you think that will help with being a councilor?
I am a re	etired lawyer with broad experience as a barrister and solicitor.
3.What is y	our leadership style?
Collaboi	rative
9.If you co	uld only do one thing for this city in your term, what do you want that thing to be?
	a Council of united, community minded councillors who understand their relationship with the CAO and communicate clearly their shared vision to staff

10.In the event you're elected to council, and we were to review your performance 12 months down the road, what metric should we judge you on?

Have I been forthright, honest, approachable, respectable and easy to understand. Have I demonstrated a committment to the best interests of Medicine Hat and not pursued a personal agenda.

11.In terms of preparing for complex budgets, bylaw restructuring, as well as general communicative skills among the public and amongst council, how would you rate your readiness level for governance, and why?

My past experience has prepared me for this role and I have demonstrated that am capable of being a constructive team player.

12. Given the diverse field of candidates and polarity of opinions around the horseshoe it will be critical that council comes together as one. With the backdrop of the last 4 years and the inaction it has brought to the city collaboration and swift change will be a high expectation of the citizens.

What does collaboration mean to you? Can you describe how you plan to collaborate with your new colleagues?

Colloboration begins with listening and speaking my mind clearly, adopting not a personal agenda, but one that is in directed at what is best for the City and its residents. I am respectful in my demeanour and language so that while I communicate my ideas clearly and passionately, I do not give offence to anyone.

13. How many city council meetings have you attended/viewed in the last year & what have you done to learn how municipal government works?

I've been following the business of the City in the media and I have attended meetings in person and on line. I have read the Investigator's Report and understand its observations and recommendations.

14. Some councilors have sat on council for multiple terms - some might feel this hinders the City moving forward (same old, same old...)

What is your view, thoughts, or opinion on instituting 'term limits' for the number of times an individual can sit on council? What maximum number of terms do you consider acceptable?

I do not agree with term limits but I have long advocated for split terms so that elections would be held every 2 years, electing 4 of the total 8 councillors. Example: This year the mayor and the top 4 councillors on the ballot would be elected for 4 year terms. In 2 years the lowest 4 councillors would be seeking re-election and thereafter at least half of the councillors terms would end. This would allow for some experience to be built in to the composition of City Council while allowing the electorate to choose some new candidates every 2 years, while not creating a situation where there is massive turnover, such as what happened in 2021.

15. What is your vision for Medicine Hat in the next 5-10 years?

My Vision is that Medicine Hat will be a Community of Choice; a community that people choose to live in because of our superior quality of life, affodability and responsible government.

16. What would you do to restore trust within the community?

I am a stand-up kind of person. I speak my mind, listen attentively, and act openly with integrity. People know that they can trust me to behave in the best interests of the residents and the City. There are no personal agendas, axes to grind or ideologies that dictate my position on the pragmatic issues we face.

17. What do you believe is the role of City Council versus the role of the City Manager?

City Council provides governance. We establish vision and a plan to implement that vision. The City Manager is their to activiate staff and accomplish the plan that has been communicated.

18. What are your thoughts on a Ward or Council responsible for an area of the city?

Medicine Hat doesn't need a ward system. This community is not big enough to set district against district. The Mayor and every Councillor must always act with a view to the whole.

19. Are you able to give 100% of your time to Council or do you have another business that will split your time commitment?

I am retired and have no employment committments.

20.If you could change one thing/decision this last council did, what would that be, and why?

The hiring of the CAO. Their choice was clearly faulty and I have heard that there was no checking of references which would have discovered unsatisfactory performance by this individual in the past. I can only attribute this to the inexperience of the mayor and the fact that the majority of councillors were newly elected.

21. What was the biggest challenge with Council in the last term and what can be done to resolve that moving forward?

Councillors felt that only their approach to the issues was valid and they did not work together as a team, listening to each other and amending their individual positions to reach a workable consensus.

22.Can you share an example from your time on council, on a committee or in your personal life where you had to weigh conflicting information or opinions? How did you decide which input was most reliable?

Searching for truth requires evaluating the sources of information for accuracy and integrity. Who is saying What and Why? Stand apart and consider the options presented in an objective manner and not by some pre-determined bias.

23.Do you believe there is a different standard or different set of rules for you/Council vs. average citizens?

Council has a higher set of expectations to reach for and must attain and maintain credibility and respect in everything they say and do.

24.Everyone makes mistakes. I'd like to know, if you make a mi<mark>stake d</mark>o you accept accountability and own up to it? Or do you say nothing and perhaps blame it on someone else?

I have never shirked responsibility or shifted blame. I stand by my words and actions and if they are found to be wanting I will hold myself to account.

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What does collaboration mean to you? Can you describe how you plan to collaborate with your new colleagues?

26. How will you hold yourself accountable for building, nurturing, and maintaining professional relationships in your role?

If I am out of line in my demeanour or attitude towards those I am in relationship with I expect to be called to account. I am by nature outgoing, positive and constructive in what I believe, say and do.

27. What do you feel the role of for mayor and municipal councils to advocate when the provincial government makes decisions which damage the community?

Speak up. Try to affect change in the provincial government's stance.

28. What are your plans for regional collaboration and building relationships with Cypress County, Redcliff and Brooks?

This collobora; tion and relationship building is mandated by provincial legislation. Regional Development plans must be reviewed regularly. Meeting with councillors of neighbouring counties, towns and cities in both formal and informal settings is important.

29.Is promising a property tax freeze or a promise to not increase taxes realistic? How would you propose to implement any taxation plans.

A promise to not increase taxes is NOT realistic. Keep them in line and minimize increases is the best option.

30. Most candidates tend to say "I won't raise taxes". How do you plan to support essential programs as services with less money?

I never said "I won't raise taxes".

31. Are you for or against lower business expenses, fees and taxes at the cost of residential taxes going up?

Not necessarily. Balance is the rule of the day.

32. What is your plan to grow the tax base?

Grow the population is the best alternative.

33. What services are you proposing to cut to be able to promise no tax increases (or even lower taxes). What roads won't be maintained? What recreation facilities will be closed? what parks won't be maintained? What infrastructure repairs will be deferred?

I am neither promising no tax increases nor major cuts to services. Recreation facilities need to increase with growth in population, parks are there to be enjoyed by everyone and must be maintained or improved, infrasture repairs have been deferred longer than they should've been resulting in major expenditures and disruption. Council needs to hold the line on wage increases at all levels while recognizing that, as in most things in life, you get what you pay for.

34.How would you handle all the asks put forward to the city while juggling amendments to the budget?

By asking these questions: What is necessary? What is reasonable? What is affordable?

35.If Council freezes taxes, will they also pass a freeze on rental increases?

Council cannot freeze rent increases. This is beyond their jurisdiction and resides with the poweres belonging to provincial and federal government.

36. What steps will you take to protect local decision-making, strengthen our economy, and ensure that common-sense governance prevails over ideology?

When you are making decisions about the most pragmatic of issues impacting daily life there is no room for ideological positioning.

37. What do you believe is the role of consultants hired by the City and the value you believe they bring if they are from outside of our city?

We don't know it all in Medicine Hat. Best practices from other municipalities in other parts of the country or the world should be considered. Consultants can gather and present that information. It is for Council to decide if they agree or otherwise.

38. What are your thoughts on the narrowing of Division Ave? What do you see as the concerns or hazards related to that roadway now?

It was a zealous application of traffic calming measures which went too far. My concern is with the access and egress from Division Avenue to the interesecting streets. It's confined and too small requiring all vehicles to make adjustments and compensations in turning on to or off of Division Avenue.

39. Would you consider re-building Division Ave to correct the mistakes that were made?

Let's wait and see how it works out and what real problems and dangers arise.

40. Where do you stand on creating the MCC and why?

Absolutely not. This has been brought to Council several times, always with major consultant fees and we always return to the same position: hire our own higly competent staff to provide information and advice on operations and let Council make the governance decisions. Historically, this has worked extremely well. Nobody gets it right 100% of the time. Overall, the trajectory has been very positive and the returns made for the benefit of CMH and its residents have been and still are the envy of other communities. If it ain't broke; don't fix it!

41. What are your views on the solar project?

CMH is in and SHOULD BE IN the energy business. Solar is an important part of generating electricity and if CMH is in that business it must stay up with the times.

42. Will you be able to help keep our utility bills as the lowest in the Province since we currently own our own utilities? How do you plan to achieve this?

By maintaining not just City ownership but also Council control of decision making. We've always been there, why would Council do anything to change that.

43. What are your thoughts on selling Medicine Hat Utilities?

Don't do it. There's no reason why we should, so let's stop spending \$\$\$ every couple of years to engage in another such naval gazing exerceise. Remember, that for every expert or consultant who advocates one position, there can be found at least another on the exact opposite side of the question. Historical experience has shown us that owning our utilities has proved to be highly effective and affordable for our residents while returning large dividends to cover the cost of other municipal operations.

44. What is your plan to address the issues related to crime, mental health and addictions in Medicine Hat?

Housing first is an important approach to these related problems. Presently our resources are overwhelmed by the number of addicts and homeless. We need to work in partnership with other levels of government to address the underlying causes of these situations.

45. Is there more we can do (or should do) to reduce criminal activity in our city?

We have very low crime rates in Medicine Hat. Having police officers visibly present in various neighbours is a deterrent. Police on bicyles in the downtown has made a strong impact.

46. Where do you believe the emergency shelter should be located?

It belongs where it will affect the best advantage but consideration must be given to the impact on the surrounding and adjoining neighbourhoods. Sufficient facitilies and services must attend these locations so that they aren't just temporary meeting places that turn their clients out on a vulnerable population.

47. What is your position or perspective on flags on public buildings or government buildings?

The policy of the CMH in this regard is inclusive and pbulic spirited. I see no reason for change.

48.What is your view on the proposed bylaw amendment (Land Use) to enable backyard chickens?

I support it.

49. What do you believe is the Medicine Hat Advantage? How will you promote this advantage and increase our quality of life in Medicine Hat?

So much goes into this: climate, location, services, facitilies, shopping, cost of living, opportunity. Let's not hide our light under a bushel. We need to trumpet our superior quality of life at every turn.

50. Would you strive to reduce the number of employees at City Hall?

Not necessarily reduce across the whole operation but an examination of what is necessary in each department does need to be undertaken. Some reductions should result if staff are approaching this task objectively.

51.Is there a way we can break down jobs on the local bids and tenders site so more for small businesses can obtain opportunities? Example: Mow a park, but the bid also includes cement pouring as well.

This question doesn't make sense to me.

52.Is there anything Council can do to prevent large corporations from monopolizing housing in Medicine Hat?

The purchase and sale of real estate is a free market enterprixe. The Community Housing Authority does own many units which are rented at reduced rates based on income testing. This provides some balance.

53. What would you do to advertise and promote Medicine Hat to the rest of the country?

Personally, I would attend as many conferences and trade shows as are realistic. Advertising can be effective. We have a great product - let's sell it.

54.Every candidate has brought up "creating jobs and growing local economy". What is your position on remote work/jobs at City Hall?

There's a time and place for everything but generally, work should take place in an office setting.

55. How will you ensure Medicine Hat remains a welcoming place to all and uphold policies that protect marginalized communities?

I think we are a welcoming community and we need to remain aware of where and when marginalization occurs and speak out against it. We must not allow the negative voices to overwhelm our better instincts.

56. What is your plan to grow Medicine Hat's population?

This problem is multi-faceted. Council needs to recognize that growth has stagnated and develop an intentional plan to change that. The new Mayor and Council need to begin by taking a close look at our current economic development initiatives and make impactful changes in focus and direction. Each councillor and each citizen must be an ambassador for Medicine Hat. Stay positive and don't be quiet.

57. What is your approach to the complex infrastructure problems our city faces?

You'd have to be more specific for me to answer this question.

58. What would you do to move forward Medicine Hat as a labour friendly community?

If is a labour friendly community. Recognizing that workers are what make the world go round is vital.

59. What is your opinion of un-unionized workplaces and do you support them?

I support all workplaces and I know that unions have achieved a higher standard of living for everyone, whether they work in a unionized workplace or not.

60.Surveys have indicated that a significant reason for people to choose to move to Medicine Hat are the parks and recreation facilities along with natural areas.

How would you as Mayor of Medicine Hat prioritize supporting parks and natural areas within Medicine Hat as a component of quality of life for Medicine Hat citizens?

It is a priority and is well articulated in our Municipal Plan.

61.Climate change will increase extreme weather events and low stream flow in the South Saskatchewan River. The City of Medicine Hat will be challenged to provide water and other support services due to climate change in the future. How can the City Council and leadership best develop resiliency in face of these challenges?

We can't be climate change deniers. This is real, however it is caused, and must be kept in mind with every decision Council makes.

62. What is your plan to keep young people in this city?

People, young and old, go where they see opportunity. We must maintain our high quality of life and work for more and varied job opporunities. Some people will stay and some will go in search. That's life in every community.

63. Tourism is an important economic driver for Medicine Hat. When elected my hope is that the Council and Mayor will plan to safeguard the natural areas and beauty of the city so visitors will continue to make it a holiday destination, or even their new home. After all, all Canadian cities have swimming pools, rinks and arenas but no other Canadian city has the beauty and health-giving benefits of Medicine Hat's river, coulees and parks. The citizens of Medicine Hat need clean water, air and soil as well as wild spaces and wildlife. These things are of real cultural and economic value to us all.

When considering the approval of expanding or new business and manufacturing developments how high a priority should the Council and Mayor give to environmental stewardship?

Environmental stewardship is consideration in everything the City undertakes.

64. There is a large impact that constantly changing policies have on the business sector and citizens of Medicine Hat involved in the hospitality and care industries. What are your views/stance on Temporary Foreign Workers, Student visas and RNIP for the city if the federal government reintroduces the policy?

This is not within the duties and responsibilities of the municipal government.

65.As an avid cyclist, I commuted the last 7 years of working on streets, and found it was fine. Medicine Hat has a great system of recreational pathways but they need to be maintained better and expanded. Therefore there is no need restriction city vehicle traffic for bike lanes.

Do you favour using city funds to maintain and expand recreational bike paths or do you favour spending city funds on commuter bike lanes on streets?

I think there is a place for both.

66.Will you support the construction of a new recreation center in South Ridge during your term? Why or why not?

Yes. It's time to rebalance these services so that all parts of the City have reasonable access to recreation opportunities. These don't need to be constructed in all neighbourhoods but there should be some balanced geographic distribution.

67. When it comes to mental health and addiction, much of the conversation focuses on treatment. But recovery is not a short term problem, it's a long term journey and the data shows that post-care should not be treated as 'extra' but as a core part of recovery. Post-care, peer support, and recovery coaching organizations often struggle with short-term, unstable funding. What would you do to ensure these programs are properly funded and sustained long-term, rather than relying on temporary project grants?

This falls outside of the directives to municipalities in the Municipal Government Act. Council should not allow the provincial government to download this, but advocate for this care if the province is neglecting their duties.

68.Do you support Medicine Hat paying Redcliff to handle our composting program?

It is an option to be considered. A regional operation may provide cost savings to all partners. I'm not opposed but I need more information.

69. Activities for generations are very separated in Medicine Hat. How would you promote intergenerational living and learning?

I don't think this is a problem that requires Council's attention. It is a concept that must be kept in mind when evaluating all proposals for development.

70. We have heard for a long time that there will be a second entrance to Saamis Heights. It has not happened, the traffic is getting worse and it is becoming very difficult to enter and leave the area, what will you do to see that this actually happens and when?

 $Examine \ and \ review \ the \ Transportation \ Master \ Plan \ and \ direct \ staff \ to \ address \ the \ issue \ with \ a \ realistic \ solution.$