

The Voice of Business

Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce 2025 Municipal Election Forum Memorandum of Understanding

This memorandum of understanding constitutes an agreement between


herein referred to as “the candidate”

and

The Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce

This Memorandum of Understanding constitutes the rules that will govern the Municipal Election Forums, hosted by the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce, on September 24 and 26, 2025.

In consideration of the Chamber hosting the forums and the candidates participating in the forums, and in consideration of the promises contained herein, the Parties agree as follows.

1. Date, Time, & Location
 - a. All forums will be held at the Esplanade.
 - b. The forum for new and incumbent council candidates will be held on September 24th and 26th, 2025.
 - c. The forum for mayoral candidates held on Friday, September 26, 2025.
 - d. All forums will start promptly at the posted time in Mountain Standard Time, on each of the scheduled evenings and will be determined based on the number of candidates participating.
2. Participants
 - a. Any candidate who has officially filed his or her nomination documents with the returning officer by 12:00pm on September 22nd and has not rescinded their candidacy or been denied entry for not meeting the necessary requirements in the time since filing will be invited to participate in the 2025 Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce Municipal Election Forums.
 - b. Before being accepted into the debates, candidates must have signed and accepted this Memorandum of Understanding, agreeing to abide by all rules and regulations set out herein, and returned it to the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce offices at 413 6th Ave. SE Medicine Hat, AB no later than noon 12:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time on Tuesday, September 23, 2025.
 - c. Candidates who do not sign this memorandum of understanding or return it by the designated time will be denied entry into the debate.
 - d. Any modifications to this agreement must be agreed upon by each of the signatories to this agreement as well as all other candidates selected to join the debate.
3. Sponsorship
 - a. Candidates who execute this agreement agree to attend and participate in the 2025 Municipal Election Forum sponsored by The Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce.
4. Moderator
 - a. The forum will have a single moderator as chosen by the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce.
 - b. By signing this agreement, the parties indicate that they will accept The Chamber’s selection of a moderator.
 - c. The Chamber reserves the right to have additional support staff present at all forums to assist the moderator in the successful execution of his or her role, including a time-keeper, a fact checker, as well as audience and internet liaisons and security.
 - d. The moderator is granted the authority to prohibit a candidate from answering questions if the candidate chooses to participate in a frivolous fashion or if a candidate trivializes or mocks the debate proceedings. If the candidate continually chooses to make a mockery of the questions, debate or event after being provided a warning on stage by the moderator, the moderator has the authority to have the candidate escorted off the stage and removed from the debate

5. Rules of Debate

- a. The duration of the forum will be no shorter than sixty (60) minutes and no longer than one hundred and twenty (120) minutes.
- b. Council candidates will be allowed to make an opening statement that will be no longer than sixty (60) seconds.
- c. Mayoral candidates will be allowed to make an opening statement that will be no longer than one hundred and 80 (180) seconds (3 minutes).
- d. Candidates will be allowed to make a closing statement that will be no longer than two (2) minutes.
- e. Each candidate will be given sixty (60) seconds to reply to the moderator's questions.
- f. Each candidate will address questions and statements to and through the moderator, rather than to other candidates.
- g. Following all candidates' sixty (60) second responses, the moderator, at his or her discretion, will open up the floor to no more than four (4) minutes of free debate amongst all candidates.
- h. During the free debate portion of the event, no candidate may speak for more than thirty (30) seconds consecutively.
- i. The moderator must give candidates the floor before speaking, including if a candidate wishes to make a rebuttal.
- j. No props, notes, charts, diagrams or other writings or tangible things may be brought into the debate by any candidate.
- k. No candidates may reference or cite any specific individual sitting in the debate audience at any time during the debate.
- l. If a candidate references or cites any specific individual(s) sitting in a debate audience, or if a candidate uses a prop, note, or other writing, the moderator must interrupt and explain that the action violates the rules agreed to by all candidates.
- m. Candidates may take notes during the debate using the pen and paper provided for them by the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce.
- n. The order of opening statements, questions, and closing statements will be determined in advance by the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce.
- o. Candidates will be referred to by the title "Candidate (Last Name)" during all portions of the evening, excluding the introduction and thanks at the end of the program, at which time they will be referred to by their first and last name only.
- p. Whether or not a debate runs beyond the planned ending time, each candidate shall be entitled to make a closing statement in the predetermined order.
- q. Candidates executing this agreement must agree to participate in all sections of the debate and answer any and all questions directed to them by the moderator.
- r. In each debate, the moderator shall:
 - i. Announce the beginning and end of the event.
 - ii. Introduce all participating parties and explain the rules of the event to the audience.
 - iii. In each instance where a candidate exceeds the permitted time for comment, the moderator shall interrupt and remind both the candidate and the audience of the expiration of the time limit and call upon such candidate to observe the strict time limits which have been agreed upon by stating "I am sorry... [Candidate _____ as the case may be] your time is up."
 - iv. Use his or her best efforts to ensure that an equal amount of time is given to each candidate during the course of each evening's debate.
 - v. Use any reasonable method to ensure that both the candidates and the audience follow the agreed-upon format.
 - vi. At the end of the event, thank all candidates for their participation.
- s. The audience will be invited to submit business-related questions for the candidates in advance via submissions to the Chamber office via email. The Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce reserves the discretion to select the questions that will be presented to the candidates during the debate.
- t. The audience may be invited to submit questions to candidates in writing at the forum which will be collected by Chamber volunteers and delivered to designated forum scrutineers. The moderator may or may not, at his/her discretion, ask these questions to the candidates.
- u. At no time during the debate will any candidate move from their designated seat or station, leave the stage, or walk into the audience.

6. Topics of Debate

- a. The topics of debate for each forum may include, but are not limited to the following topics:
 - i. General understanding of candidate qualifications and priorities
 - ii. Relationship with other levels of government and decisions that may impact municipal affairs
 - iii. City of Medicine Hat Energy Business
 - iv. Economic Development
 - v. Creating a Business-Friendly Environment
 - vi. Housing
 - vii. Fiscal Sustainability
 - viii. Transportation Master Plan
 - ix. Air Service
- b. No candidate will have access to or knowledge of the questions to be asked prior to the event.

7. Arrivals / Holding Rooms

- a. Candidates are asked to wait in the designated Green Room (Courtyard) before the commencement of the event.
- b. Candidates will be escorted to the theatre from the Green Room via rear access to the stage.
- c. No media will be allowed access to the Green Room and candidates should have no more than one campaign staff member or family member accompany them into this space.

- d. Any candidates who are not present in the Green Room at exactly 10 minutes prior to the start time of the presentation will be excluded from the debate and have their chair sit empty for the duration of the event.

8. Staging

- a. For all debates, each candidate will be seated at a long rectangular table with table top microphones provided.
- b. Candidates may or may not share a table or microphone with other candidates.
- c. Tables will be covered in a long table cloth so that nothing is visible beneath the table.
- d. Chamber branding / logos may appear onstage at the discretion of the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce.
- e. The moderator will be seated at a table located on stage, visible to all candidates, and may be accompanied by any other event staff designated by The Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce.
- f. A timing clock will be located on a table in the front row of the audience, within the eye line of all candidates in order to give them an indication of how much time they have remaining to speak.
- g. A bottle of water will be provided for each candidate at their designated station.
- h. A name plaque will be provided for each candidate.
- i. A pen and small pad of paper will be provided for all candidates for taking notes.

9. Audience Considerations

- a. The audience will be admitted to the theatre beginning at 5:30 p.m. on the evening of the forum.
- b. The audience will be instructed by the moderator prior to the introduction of the candidates not to applaud, speak, or otherwise participate in the debate by any means other than by silent observation. In the event of and in each instance whereby an audience member attempts to participate in a debate by any means, the moderator shall instruct the audience to refrain from any participation. The moderator shall use his or her best efforts to enforce this provision.
- c. In exception to 9. b., the moderator may invite the audience to join him or her in a round of applause at the end of each evening's event to thank the candidates for their participation.
- d. In the case that an audience member refuses to abide by the rules and regulations set out to govern this debate, he or she will be asked to leave, escorted off the premises, and denied re-entry to that evening's as well as any future forum events.

10. Media, Audio Recording, Video Recording, Photography & Broadcast

- a. The forum may be recorded by authorized media for the purpose of rebroadcasting at the discretion the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce. Media may also be present before, during and after the event for news coverage and interviews.
- b. Candidates and their agents, employees, campaign staff, family or private contractors will not be allowed to record either audio or audio-visual material or take photographs at these events without the written consent of the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce.
- c. In executing this agreement, the candidate releases the rights to the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce to use audio, video, and photographic materials containing the candidate's image, voice, or likeness to be used, transmitted, and broadcast by authorized local media and the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce for distribution in various formats in perpetuity.

11. Marketing, Election Propaganda & Literature

- a. Candidates and their agents, employees, campaign staff, family or private contractors will not be allowed to bring or display any campaign material, propaganda, videos or literature at these events.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Candidate agrees to abide by this Memorandum of Understanding
this ____ day of _____, 2025.

SIGNED

Candidate: Print Name

Witness: Print Name

Candidate: Signature

Witness: Signature