

Jay Hitchen

2.Campaign Email - For Public Distribution

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3.Campaign Website

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4.Campaign Social Media

NA

5.Who are you and why should I vote for you?

You should vote for who you believe has the skills to move the city forward. Take the time do your research. Look at what I've done in the community, my background who I am and make your own decision. No smoke and mirrors here I am exactly as I appear.

6.What Governance, Board, Council, Community or Committee experience do you have in your past that would make you a good Councillor?

My governance experience has included sitting on boards with the Gas City Center Society, The MH Judo Club and with Judo Alberta, The Canadian Association of Broadcasters Blue Ribbon Panel the Canadian Country Music Associations Advisory Panel.

7.What is your professional/work background & how do you think that will help with being a councilor?

My life's career was in broadcasting where I travelled across Western Canada working in many different cities. When I retired from that profession, I entered into the restaurant business with a close friend and business partner. My life has been dealing with the public, analyzing research, communicating effectively and efficiently. Developing a message, building teams and working towards common goals. All skills I know are valuable to the City Of Medicine Hat.

8.What is your leadership style?

I believe my leadership style is personable. Get to know the people that you are working with understand what motivates them how they communicate learn their mannerisms read beyond the words, understand each other as efficiently as you can. When issues arrive face it head on honestly with a measured even approach, excluding any emotional reaction.

9.If you could only do one thing for this city in your term, what do you want that thing to be?

Simply enough, my goal would leave would be to leave the city better than I found it.

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?

There will be lots of metrics and measurements over the first 12 months in office. Firstly will be the very first budget that's required of council to pass basically as soon as they walk through the door. You'll also be able to witness interactions during council meetings, the type of conduct that is carried on between them and compare that to past councils. Are they visible in the community? Have you met them yet? Have you seen them at functions? Are they visible presence representing you the way you want to be.

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?

Considering communication with my career, my communication skills would not be an issue. My time with working with Patterson and Monarch saw doing budgets with great regularity they will no doubt be minor compared to what the city has to go through but the basics of the budget process were very much apart of our lives in that industry. By law restructuring that will take some learning and learning is what I do.

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?

Obviously collaboration is when you work together, but more importantly, it's also the ability to put aside personal differences and to recognize the goal that you have to accomplish as a relatively unified body. You must find that common ground, those common reasons or any concerns that might prevent you from advancing have to be met and discussed and answered, and it's not about who came up with the idea it's about finding the best idea and implementing it.

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

Running for city Council was not on my dance card this year. I probably witnessed no more than half a dozen council meetings beyond that and I have spent considerable time reading through minutes, press releases, master plans etc. Following the City website and being part of their email group, basically just as any citizen would do being connected with my City. I also had the rare pleasure of cohosting a podcast with the mayor. It was a six podcast pilot sponsored by the city, and it allowed me to meet with some key principal operators within the city about matters that are of concern to residence. Everything from taxes to homelessness.

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 don't believe term limits are necessary. It's a rather rare case that someone sits on council for many consecutive terms and ultimately that would be a ruling left up to the provincial government as they are the ones that set those guidelines. It would be the voter that actually determines that repetition.

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

I could see a Medicine Hat, 10 years down the road that's expanded its energy outlook, that has developed a waterfront, that has once again eliminated homelessness and created a vibrant community on a study upward trend.

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

Trust once lost is not easily restored. It will take considerable effort and time, but ultimately that trust will only be reformed through results and the honest, earnest desire to do the best for the citizens of Medicine Hat.

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

The city manager by definition is the chief administrative officer. So they are in charge of administration. They are also in charge of providing valuable advice to council, maintaining the budget, developing long-term budgets and protecting the legal grounds of the city. A councillor is a pipeline to the people. They are the ones that pass bylaws, that review and approve budgets. Make sure that we are going in the direction that Medicine Hat wants us to go in as well as representing the city public being that forward face in the community.

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

From what little I know about the ward system a ward is typically between 63,000 and 120,000 people. There is one councillor representing that ward. They are a full-time person with an office and support staff. I do not believe Medicine Hat is ready for that type of system yet. With the population of 63,000 we are better represented by 8 that speak for the entire city as opposed to representing their neighbourhoods. Our needs are broader than that.

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

100% of my time would be an incredible commitment, but I can tell you I have no other job than being a dad husband and a granddad so I would dedicate myself to serving the City Of Medicine Hat to the best of my ability

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

As to the motivations or accomplishments of last council, I was not in favour of the revitalization of old facilities. The upkeep and repair costs of those facilities would've been better served put towards a more efficient newer multiplex, as much as it's convenient to have something you can walk to in your neighbourhood. I do not believe the cost per resident ratio would live up to scrutiny.

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

The biggest, there were so many. Yet to be proven, but the move towards transparency may have been the most problematic. I think once you pulled back the curtain; even though they're still a call for even more transparency, as you look at the workings of a council and how they are not one cohesive unit no matter how good your council is there will be differing opinions. It's kind of like if the kids see the parents arguing and the kids get upset. How do you go about resolving that, you would need to carefully consider that which should be discussed in public so maybe there is a thing as too much transparency. I believe the wish for transparency is that people want to know about the decisions that affect them most not be witness to every disagreement.

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?

Conflicting information and conflicting opinions are two very different things. Information is easily researched and I do pride myself on doing considerable research. You need to ensure you know your facts, know the situations and actually come to a place where the information being presented is not new to you. Differing opinions occur every day. Make sure to listen to what is being said carefully. Then form your response in a manner that will not spark any more emotion or add kindling to the fire that may potentially be burning, but express yourself in a fact based authoritative way. Clearly communicating your opinion and the justification for it.

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

I would hope that everyone conducts themselves with honour and integrity. As a member of council, you are under constant scrutiny for your public behaviour, including your dress, associates, and whereabouts. Therefore, there is an expectation that a member of city council would be held to a higher standard.

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

I do make mistakes and often, and I do fess up to them just as quickly, quite often the person receiving my apologies my wife, but that's been life lately. I've never been too proud not to stop and listen to what's being said, and to admit when my point of view is not correct.

25. 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?

Please see the answer to question 12, which is identical.

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

Holding myself accountable is the easy thing my own moral compass will do that. I've lived my life with the commitment to do what I say I will do and not just to give words to service, but to actually follow through on my actions. Conducting myself professionally is nothing short of the bare minimum that I would expect myself.

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?

The only answer to that question is to stand up for what you believe in. You don't just lay down when you're being pushed. There has to be an appropriate response to every action.

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

Any direction for real growth will involve a regional outlook I believe that strongly so there would be a continued call for further interaction between our regional partners

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

I do not believe any promise of a tax freeze is feasible. That would only defer higher increases down the road give us the inability to keep up with the cost of living with the 15 different unions that comprise the city being only a small part of that equation. Any taxation plan going forward would have to be reasonable. We want to avoid excessive increases on the continual basis which we seen now because we are playing catch-up to a two year tax freeze that we already had during very tough economic times. So let's look at fact based reasonable Tax increases.

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'm not most candidates supporting essential services is in its own word essential. More complete answer above.

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

I do not believe that any benefits for business should be at the cost of residential taxes. Any of those investments need to return the benefit to the city as a whole not just to one entity.

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

I've always believed in creating an exceptional product and once you've done that it almost sells itself. We need to ensure that the City Of Medicine Hat is the absolute gem that we know it is in our own minds. Are we offering a complete range of services that new industry is looking for when they want to set up here. The basics that are necessary for them operate from here efficiently. Is there proper access at the airport, the ability for their employees to find fulfilling lives in this community. Do we have the resources they need to succeed and if not, what can we do to make sure we provide them?

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?

Obviously a big concern for many of you not my plan to cut taxes and decrease service. Couple answers above.

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

Like everything in life you prioritize, you have a limited amount of money, a limited amount of amendments that you can make. I've always liked to under promise and then overdeliver, so let's keep our expectations within the scope of our ability to achieve them.

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

The city has no mechanism to freeze rent, that is strictly under the purview of the provincial government which already sets out those guidelines.

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

Number one I'm not an idealist. I am a pragmatist. I do believe in making strong decisions that will benefit us and yes, common sense has not been entirely common as the saying goes, but that is one of the things I pride myself on. So beyond my commitment and telling you that I will use those life skills that I have developed over a lifetime. I would recommend you look at my background.

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?

Consultants have their place they are that 30,000 foot view of the situation that you're dealing with. They often come with skill sets that are uniquely developed to provide you with that aerial view and the distance to remove any emotion or biased opinion that you may have developed. Ultimately their role is to provide that, but the decision, the interpretation of that information must happen at the local level because there are other considerations we know intimately. Use the tools that they provide whether it be research through polls, public opinion or focus groups but realize it is only one tool to be used and not all the answers. This process can often reveal reasons to ask even more questions.

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?

I referred to the work on Division Avenue as a beautiful mess. It's quite obvious that it has not served the residence of that neighbourhood appropriately nor upon my backwards looking review was there the proper amount of consultation conducted with the residence most affected.

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

Only if we were sitting on a giant pot of money, we didn't know what to do with. If there are safety issues that must be dealt with I don't believe that would be a complete rebuild, but there is potential for modifications if required.

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

The current or the first submission on the MCC seemed to be a good way to spend a lot of money. I don't believe it would return the benefits that we are hoping it would. The city has managed its energy resources for over 100 years and yes, the climate has changed significantly, but if we hire the right people couldn't we continue to see the profits that we desire?

41. What are your views on the solar project?

We have already commissioned a report on the viability of the project. It is in our best interest to wait for that report and to study it thoroughly when it comes back before making any decision. It would be premature draw conclusions based on feelings while awaiting the study.

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?

Given our unique situation, this does seem achievable, but we must remember that electricity is a commodity, and we don't control the market. Therefore, we must always be aware of what's happening around us.

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

Vehemently opposed.

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

Crime is dealt with by the police commission, not directly by City Council. We do have a serious provincial issue with the Crown, as many cases are back on the streets before paperwork is even processed. Health is under provincial jurisdiction, and it is up to the city to provide housing for the homeless and address our city's needs. I would work closely with Medicine Hat Community Housing to address these issues.

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

City police is already one of our highest funded services. I believe they are doing the best they can to keep up with the situation has been increasingly getting worse. We can always do things better working actively with the police commission we would search for the best path forward.

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

The city has already considered nine different options for finding suitable space. If you know of a location that would be well-suited, please submit it to the city. This will likely continue to be a challenge, as businesses and residents may deem it undesirable in their own neighbourhoods. Placing it in the middle of a field in the middle of nowhere would also not be ideal for anyone.

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

Who knew that in 2025 flags would be such a contentious issue. We currently have one flagpole available for community clubs and recently that has created some community outcry. In the end it might just have to be one of those services that no longer exists unless people can set their biases aside and not worry about a piece of cloth flying over overhead.

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

Without further study I really don't see the harm in having a chicken or two in your backyard. I would hope that there are controls for the numbers and some ability to address the issue if it becomes a full blown hen farm, but really what harm does it do? I'm also in favour of gardens you know so food stability is an ongoing issue, especially as things become more expensive so so long as there are no objections from your neighbours and there isn't any concerns with noise or smell I don't see it as an issue.

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?

Energy has always been our advantage properly managing that advantage has been the ongoing issue for as long as I've lived here. Basic reliance on oil and gas needs a broader vision as these have been called nonrenewable resources for a reason so if we are to continue with that energy advantage, we need to broaden our definition of what energy is.

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

In business employees are often your number one expense so a thorough review of how we are staffed would certainly be prudent on behalf of city council.

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.

I have used the local bids and tender site but not to the degree that you're discussing. Have you proposed this to anyone that is actually in charge of the site now? I think you make a valid point and it's worth exploring. For my limited use too. I do not believe that the city controls the site. I think it's a service that they lease.

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

Monopolization of housing is a difficult issue. The city does not actually control who buys or who sells to who. Once again a rental and the overall control of rentals does get covered under legislation from the province so I'm going to assume and let me stress, assume that the province would have to be the one to set up guidelines on ownership. I don't believe there's any appetite for controlling any type of capitalist structure.

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

You basically said it advertise and promote. We've had a saying in the broadcast industry for decades. There's a terrible thing that happens when you don't advertise, nothing. There is already a market structure in place. It would need to be reviewed to make sure that we are maximizing our resources attending the proper trade shows networking with other communities reviewing all of our online assets and making sure that we are actually targeting the demographics that are desirable for our population growth.

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

I'm gonna try and read a little bit more into your question here. Could it be possible that you're asking how many of our local jobs are being consumed by people that do not actually live in this city? If that's the case, this would have to be taken very seriously I would like people working for the city to live in the city, but there is also the possibility that there is a unique skill set that is not available in the city, and if we have exhausted, local resources as opposed to doing without that service I can see us contracting it out until such time as there would be someone available in the city to do that function.

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

I'm in support of the community services that we have operating now, there's terrific work being done by the Root Cellar, Woman's Shelter and Community Housing to name a few. These are essential services and I've always worked closely with these types of services to make sure that those marginalized communities that you were talking about are treated with compassion and understanding.

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

Economic development has been the goal of every council for likely 100 years. This is something that council must take seriously because we've been basically stagnant for almost a decade. Creating a workable environment providing amenities that people not only want but need. Making sure that we have a welcoming city for industry, offering our most valuable resource at equitable pricing in fact, even more attractive than most would be the biggest key to attraction. Ensure that we are expanding that energy base would also be tremendously beneficial to that growth. Electricity will be the most valuable commodity in the next 50 years, especially with the onset of AI entering every one of our lives.

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

Rather than giving a 700 page response, which this question requires. Let's say that our complex infrastructure problem must be prioritized in the order of most need. We have to go through it systemically with a long-term vision so we don't deplete the funds that we have already set aside to deal with these issues. Long-term planning and vision with appropriate planning, pricing and execution is mandatory.

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

The industries that we attract would be the ones that would benefit labour. Focussing on industry that would actually benefit the citizens of Medicine Hat would help with that as opposed to standalone operations that do not require personnel.

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

I've worked in both in my lifetime and each has its place. I'm not opposed or in support of either as standalone choices.

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?

I'm not running for mayor, but I wholeheartedly support and love our Parks and Recreation and our natural areas. I believe they are absolutely crucial on growing growth in this community. People want connectivity and urban spaces.

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?

I've lived in the drought, stricken regions of southeastern Saskatchewan, and I've also lived in the verdant areas of Manitoba. When we first moved to Medicine Hat, I was struck by the amount of water being consumed openly in the middle of 35° days water splashing on the streets and running down storm drains. I do believe that the current steps that council has taken with the tiered rate structure for water usage and more education and initiatives to save water are step in the right direction. Water is one of our most valuable resources and we must manage it correctly. The city is already reduced consumption of water significantly through magnation in some of our larger park areas quite a fascinating development, which was launched as a trial phase here in the last couple of years.

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

This is an issue. I take very personally as both of my sons pursued higher education, which eventually took them to a larger centre where they completed their studies, found employment, formed families, and are now setting down roots. In my heart of hearts, I know this is part of the way of things, and I accept the fact that for their specialized skill sets, they had to move to larger centres in order to grow and advance, but I would like to see more options within Medicine, Hat to at least transfer to universities closer to home and also to work closely with the college to offer those programs that are most sought after by that younger demographic.

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?

I value, environmental stewardship very highly. nature is very close to me in all forms. I do not believe that we are so unique that we are the only city that has the beauty of a river valley, but we are one of a few. Other cities have actually enhanced the beautification of their waterfront areas, much more efficiently than we have. We seem to have an inordinate amount of homes with exclusive access to the river and not as many park areas or open free spaces that capitalize on that association. I was disappointed not to see the waterfront development ring any kind of responsive cord in the city. It seems to be more of a wishful unicorn than an actual project but if you look at cities like Saskatoon or Edmonton development of the River Valley areas in those fashions, I believe, has added to the mosaic of those our cities.

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?

From my years in the service industry, I can tell you without any hesitation. There are many jobs that finding suitable skilled labour for is almost impossible. The constant turnover and search for employees that fit your culture was an ongoing concern. When I looked at the temporary foreign worker program, the actual cost and commitment to get involved in that exceeded my abilities to do it so I didn't view it as an assault on the local workforce whatsoever. If we want businesses to succeed, we have to give them the tools necessary to fulfil their own ethos, not erect more roadblocks.

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 too, am an avid cyclist, having completed eight years of cancer rides around the city where I do 1000 km every year so I've seen the trails in great detail. Yes there are some that are better than others and there's nothing like the excitement of getting to ride a brand new trail so I do fully support maintaining and improving our current trail system. Even more importantly, making sure it has connectivity, which in some situations will require addition of sharerows. For the most part, I do not believe our city streets have the ability to accommodate an independent bike line, but some of our sidewalks are certainly wide enough like on Kingsway Avenue to be turned into multi-path systems, not only for cyclist, but also for the elderly that are finding more mobility with the advancement of technology. So to me, it is not in either or question both are required.

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

I do believe the construction of a southside recreation centre is in the best interest of advancing growth in the City Of Medicine Hat and servicing the needs of the people that already live there.

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?

As a city, we have limited scope with regards to healthcare. This is a responsibility of the province and to a degree federally. We can lobby on behalf of our citizens, and that would be something we would do wholeheartedly wherever provincial needs fall short. Continued support of our community services would also be a priority in that area.

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

I think it is certainly something worth exploring. A food composting is an integral part of reducing our use of landfill space which is quickly disappeared in all municipality.

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

The simplest is making sure we review Inlaw suites, allowing other revenue properties on suitable lots in the city to make sure that they actually can help fill. The need is might allow older parents to live in proximity to their children. As for activities, probably the expansion of our trail system or the availability of parks so that people can gather of all ages for different activities.

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?

At this point, all I could promise is consultation with city engineers to see what's been proposed and what is possible.

