



# Kirby Schafer

2	Campaign	Fmail -	For	Public	Distribution
۷.	Campaign	Lilian -	1 01	ublic	DISTIDUTION

kirbyforcouncil2025@gmail.com

#### 3. Campaign Website

kirby-for-council-2025.com

#### 4.Campaign Social Media

None

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

I have lived in Medicine Hat my whole life and was employed at the City of Medicine Hat in Electric Distribution for 30 years before retiring in 2021. I have worked on City budgets and was in management for 11 years. I have been through the good times and the bad times in my career. We need to get back to a "needs vs wants" philosophy when it comes to budgets and taxes. Our infrastructure and key services need to be properly budget for both accurately and strategically. We can accomplish this with accurate sustainable 5 year budgets that identify maintenance, upgrades and replacement of key assets throughout our City. This will give us an outlook to upcoming projects and provide us a roadmap in which tp plans and save for these. We also need to have budgets that contain 5%, 10% and 15% cutbacks to see how this effects services to be able to adapt to the changing economy. Comprehensive work plans from each department including work hours and available man hours to complete this work. This will ensure we have the appropraite staff to complete these projects. Once this has been completed we can look at what capital projects we need to do while keeping tax increases no more than the cost oif inflation. This will ensure we eliminate large tax increases while maintaining what the City needs to stay vibrant and attractive for business to invest in. It also adds stability to the residents to be able to prepare for taxes and not have to be tax shocked with large increases. By doing all of this it allows us to focus on other issues that require City investment to provide services such as transit improvements, homeless solutions etc. I am very detailed in my decision making and am not scared to ask questions to get all the information, pros and cons, that will help me make the best decision to ensure value is added to the community as a whole.

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

30 years employed at the City in Electric Distribution.

11 years in management sitting on budget committees for Electric Distribution.

Committee member of the CEA (Canadian Electrical Association) for Procurement.

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

30 years employed at the City in Electric Distribution.

11 years in management sitting on budget committees for Electric Distribution.

Prepared annual budgets for Operations including work plans and business plans for capital projects.

Procurement Officer which involved tenders, contracts, fleet, and inventory developing a lean approach and just in time ordering to limit carry costs and inventory

Developed KPI (Key Performance Indicators) to measure success and ensure financial accountabilities were being met or exceeded.

Committee member of the CEA (Canadian Electrical Association) for Procurement.

Networked with all the major Electrical Companies in Canada allowing me to seek out industry standards and best in practice approaches in Procurement and Operational standards.

# 8. What is your leadership style?

I am not a micromanager or a "yes man". I believe in a "team" approach that involves respect. I believe you need to involve all members of your team to achieve success. There is no such thing as a bad idea or a dumb question. I believe in process simply because it defines accountabilities and ensures smooth flow of tasks. It removes "red Tape" delays and is also measurable to see if improvements need to be made. I am always looking to improve and promote communication. I am a detailed person and rely on all the information before making a decision.

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

In simple form, I would like to make the City financially strong limiting tax increases to no more than the cost of inflation by using strategic accurate budgets that maintain strong infrastructure and services making Medicine Hat a vibrant community business want to invest in.

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?

KPI's (Key Performance Indicators ) such as:

Tax increases no higher than the cost of inflation.

Distinct Vision and Mission Statement that accurately defines the goals of what direction the City is going in to improve our community. Detailed plan to upgrade and replace as well as add infrastructure based on the needs of the community.

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?

I believe I am well prepared for the budgeting process being I have developed departmental budgets at the City in my career. Being a detailed person I feel I am a good communicator and am not scared to ask questions or share ideas. I believe if ideas are shared and respectively discussed solutions will develop. I am open minded and am dedicated to answering any question honestly while sharing all information available (except for confidential information) to help provide clarity to the public.

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?

Collaboration to me is providing constructive ideas and information on an issue or topic while respecting the ideas and information of others on the team.

I will collaborate openly, honestly and respectfully with council members and staff while keeping in mind the goal or objective we are trying to achieve.

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 have attended or watched live stream ~15 council meetings in the past 12 months. I have looked into clauses mentioned in the MGA during council meeting to attain a detailed explanation of the clause if it wasn't well communicated.

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 have not given this much thought. I feel if a councillor is still adding value and exploring new ways to improve our City they should be able to continue for multiple terms. Ultimately the voter makes the choice as to the number of terms a person can run. I would need to hear the reasons for creating this rule before saying if I am for or against this.

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

A vibrant safe community with focus on financial responsibility, first-rate infrastructure and facilities, top-level Services and service delivery while continually promoting our local economy to stimulate growth.

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

Clear open lines of communication and consultation with the community on action plans sharing reasoning and goals we are attempting achieve to reach our vision for the community. Ensure all projects consider impacts on the community like financial commitment (both initial and future costs to sustain), disruptions and timelines. This is accomplished through "change management" and "project management" philosophies where areas most effected from this decision/project are continually consulted at every stage to offer ideas, complications and obstacles that need consideration prior to decision/project design initiation.

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

City Council's duty is to govern, set policy and create by-laws that define clear goals for administration to achieve our vision. The City Manager acts jointly with Council and Administration and is accountable for delivering on council's goals. The City Manager creates a strategic proactive team to deliver best in class services and amenities while remaining financially responsible.

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

I am not sure if we are large enough for a ward system as well have many questions that need to be answered on how the areas will be broken down to create wards as some wards would have more residential while others would be more business/commercial. I would need to see the benefits for doing this and what value is added by doing this before deciding.

# 19.Are you able to give 100% of your time to Coun<mark>cil or d</mark>o y<mark>ou have ano</mark>ther business that will split your time commitment?

I am retired and will commit as much time is needed to focus on issues and solutions as well as promote the City as secure location to invest in.

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

I think every resident has one thing they would like to change back from decisions made by the previous council but I do not find it constructive to focus on what could have been but rather focus on learning from mistakes and making changes to ensure we don't repeat history. There is always room for improvement in any decision or project even those that were a success.

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

Lack of a vision with a focus on a common goal. There were individual goals and agendas both in council and Administration that didn't promote team work, and deteriorated the culture both on council and in the City as a whole. This can be resolved with a clear vision, clear policies that promote team work, collaboration, specific measurable accountabilities and strategic decision making that are aligned with our vision.

# 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?

All information needs to be checked for accuracy and authenticity before declaring it reliable. I am very detailed oriented and always look at any information and its source before believing it as reliable and true or factual.

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

We all have to live by the same rules. In term of expectations when it comes to Standard, I believe elected officials have to be held at a higher standard being they are elected and are responsible for decisions that shape the community as well as control over the spending of public funds. In terms of status when it comes to Standard, council members should be treated no differently than any other citizen of our community and should not receive any special treatment just because they are on council.

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?

Always. If we are not making mistakes we are not learning. Let me explain what I mean by that. There are two choices we can make. We can choose to never make mistakes which means we are never open to making decisions. Mistakes should not be viewed as failure but more as learnings on what we can change to ensure we don't make the same mistake in the future. I like to think of it as "you should never make the same mistake twice: the first time is a mistake, the second time is a choice."

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?

Collaboration is respectful, open and proactive dialogue aimed to achieve a successful outcome or result. This promotes a strong culture of team work and drives results to successful outcomes. I will share ideas, issues that could affect success and provide possible solutions to overcome these issues while respecting the ideas and solutions of others on our team and in the community.

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

Ensuring I promote healthy debate about an issue or decision focuses on the issue and never expands to include personal attacks. Respecting your teams expertise, knowledge and experience are critical aspects of respect and professionalism.

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?

We need to unite as a council and community as a whole to communicate with the Provincial Government to explain the impacts a decision has on our Community. Council also needs to communicate with other Communities this decision affects and build a united front to approach the Government to discuss the decision and explain the negative impacts this has on all Communities in the Province.

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

I will have to look into how this is being done and if there needs to be improvements made to this. I believe we need to have strong neighbors like Redcliff and Cypress County for our region to thrive.

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

Freezing taxes and promising no tax increases is not realistic. Promising to do a thorough review of the budget to try and find efficiencies that could be made to minimize the impact and amount of increase to taxes without jeopardizing infrastructure and services. Reviewing work plans, available employee work hours and ensuring we are not overstaffed and have enough staff to meet the work hours needed to complete projects. Reviewing Capital Projects creating realistic timelines for upgrades and replacements by creating 5 year budgets that provide a road map on future spending and creating an assets plan moving forward. Finally, setting a bench mark of no more than the cost of inflation as a rule for future 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 cannot promise to not raise taxes. I feel there should be a bench mark set that tax increases cannot exceed the cost of inflation. Creating budgets that focus on our "needs" will ensure essential programs, essential maintenance, upgrades and replacements are identified first and have funds dedicated to them. "Wants" will be addressed after this has been done if funds are available. We also need to have budgets that include 5%, 10% and 15% reductions identifying the impacts this has on Services or may provide options to reduce in areas with least amount of impact to support our essential services. This gives us an option to adapt when needed.

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

I would need to hear the pros and cons for adjusting these as it pertains to businesses and residents. This is a catch 22 scenario as if you take more from residential it means less disposable income to spend in the community. If take more from business then it means costs and prices go up. There needs to be more discussion on what is fair as possible to both sides to try an achievea win-win for the community.

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

Ensure our house is in order and we have a clear vision for business to see where our community is headed. We do this through being financially responsible and secure with our budgets, solid infrastructure and amenities, build on our advantage of owning our Electric Utility through competitive rates and reliability. These are vital to equip our Economical Development Group with when they promote Medicine Hat as a place to invest in and move your employees to.

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?

In my role as Superintendent at Electric Distribution, when I did budgets and had to explore 5%, 10% and 15% reductions I would have to go through the budget line by line to find these savings without compromising service levels. By limiting or eliminating such things as Contracted Services, not filling vacant positions, delaying fleet replacements, or postponing upgrades or replacement of assets if possible were areas that we looked at. Administration has to be strategic, creative and open minded to find solutions without impacting services.

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

All the asks have to be determined if they are "wants" or "needs". Amendments happen when there is a lack of accurate strategic budgeting. We need to create a culture that budget amendments are not a norm but rather used when changes happen that are not in our control. Demanding accurate costing, realistic timelines, market forecasts are essential to reduce the chance of having to amend budgets.

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

I don't believe council has any say in rental costs and falls outside of the scope of our powers.

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

I believe we need to take a common sense approach decision making which includes strategic thinking, fiscal responsibility through accurate needs based budgeting and decisions based on value added to the community as a whole not just for specific groups.

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 should bring expertise and proven solutions when needed. They provide a service that meets the needs of Medicine Hat and not try to make us into something we are not striving to be. With a vision in place that reflects what we as as City are trying to strive for a consultant needs to be able to deliver solutions or help for us as a community to get there.

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?

Narrowing a roadway to control speed is one thing for public safety but not seeing all the other issues it creates from access by residents with trailers to larger vehicles being able to navigate safely. I would like to know what the end goal was when planning this project? Was this something we needed as a community? What is the vision that this aligns with and where is it going to take us for future planning? What is the value added to the community for the cost of doing this project and if this is our master plan for other roadways how does this justify money well spent?

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

I would only approve changing it if it causes an immediate concern for safety for the Community. Future changes would have to be properly budgeted before I would consider it.

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

I am not convinced nor have I heard any reason why we would do this that justifies the expense required to form this. If we need industry experts maybe we need to think about recruiting them to lead our Energy Division. How do board members that have no invested interest in Medicine Hat govern our biggest asset? How does this board recover the costs associated with setting up an MCC? How will this create more revenue when we have a monopoly and are unable to extend past our service area? Too many questions that require answers to make me feel confident in creating this MCC.

41. What are your views on the solar project?

Again, there are many questions that need to be answered before I would invest in a solar project. What is the return on investment? what are the benefits for this project? Carbon credits? What are the annual maintenance/replacement or upgrade costs? What is the lifespan of the panels? What is the projected revenue from this project on an annual basis? If businesses require solar to meet their environmental policies would they partner in a project like this?

# 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?

I don't think keeping our prices lowest in the province is a realistic approach but would help achieve us being median in the province when it comes to utility rates. Strategic importing/exporting procedures, exploring more co-gen opportunities like Cancarb are some ideas to explore.

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

We are the envy of the rest of Canada for owning our own utilities and I would need concrete evidence that there is a need to sell our biggest asset. When I say concrete evidence it doesn't use words like "could", "might", "possibly" but has words "will" "is" to prove to me selling is the only option.

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

This is far larger than what council can do. This what we can do as community as a whole to help in this area. We need to get involved with our partners in the community providing supports and work together to improve this problem.

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

We can always do more but we need to focus our efforts and further efforts in the areas that need the most attention that we as a municipality can control. As a community we need to stand up and lobby our Provincial and Federal Governments to do more around laws to help us with this problems.

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

If I had the answer to this I would be sought after by every community in Canada. I am not sure if there is a 100% correct answer to this that everyone will agree with. One thing I do know is we need a facility big enough to house all the services this demographic requires to provide the most help and assistance. This will be one of the biggest challenges we face as a council and as a City and community.

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

I am not against any group or religion but I feel the only flags that should fly at government buildings is National, Provincial and Municipal flags. That is just my opinion and I make this opinion with no intention to make any one group feel segregated or alienated in any way.

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

I believe we have more critical issues to deal with then this right now. This can be addressed in the future once we get the more important issues settled that will help build our community.

# 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?

I know the Medicine Hat Advantage used to mean a number of benefits to living here. Unfortunately we have lost some of those benefits but one thing remains, we still have our own power plant and our utilities provide value and also provides a dividend to the city. We need to control spending with strategic accurate 5 year budget that ensure our infrastructure and assets remain upgraded, maintained and replaced. This will help control latge tax increases making us an affordable place to live, work and play and also helps us remain a vibrant community.

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

I would strive to do a comprehensive review of positions based on accurate work plans and employee work hours available. I would also like to review past org. charts (2015) to current day org. charts and have justification for the increased number of positions. If this reduces the numbers then we have made improvements on being overstaffed or incorrectly staffed. We blended some departments but doubled our management position which doesn't support the reasoning for doing this as efficiencies.

# 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.

When I was handling procurement at the City Electric Department we, used the APC website for all tenders. The City used to have a preferred vendor list that allowed businesses to pre-qualify for bidding. Tenders need to be written with specific scope of work required. That scope can include multiple projects. Policy would need to be reviewed and updated when it comes to tenders in order to change bidding process by administration.

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

I could be wrong but I believe there is no way City Council can stop a person or corporation from purchasing property or stop a person from selling a property to whomever they want.

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

This would fall under our Economic Development department and groups like the Chamber to lead. As a Councillor I would offer my help to these groups to promote Medicine Hat.

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

My opinion is that if the City of Medicine Hat is hiring and investing in an employee to be part of our organization the employee should do the same and relocate to be part of our City. We need a commitment shown both ways when hiring staff.

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

I will work hard to make Medicine Hat a welcoming place for EVERYONE. All policies need to be upheld, its my duty. We have to ensure all decisions add value to the community for everyone to promote a place people want to move to and visit.

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

There is no quick solution to this. As I have said multiple times, we need to get spending under control, limit tax increases to no more than the cost of inflation which will help current business expand, allow residents more expendable income to spend in the community, and attract business to invest in Medicine Hat. We need to give our Economical Development Area and the Chamber of Commerce tools to promote Medicine Hat. We also have to create policy to streamline the process for businesses to navigate through the permit process.

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

We have to start doing an asset and infrastructure management plan with time lines, end of life and schedules for updates and replacements. This allows us to map future costs and gives us time to develop a plan and save for costs. Every department should be completing these for every asset and piece of infrastructure. Proper policy needs to be created to get this started so we can predict future budgets.

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

I was not aware we were not a labor friendly community. I would need to know what the issues are before providing possible solutions.

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

I support all workplaces. I am not sure how else to answer this question.

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 am running for councillor and this addressed to the mayor candidates.

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 am not sure what the City has in place currently to address this and would need to know this before deciding if this needs further development.

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

Same answer as promoting growth (Question 56)

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?

Council needs to follow and ensure all environmental legislations are being adhered to and should always consider the environment in all decisions.

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?

If this happens we will have to adapt to these changes like any other change. Government policies change with time and elections. Municipal Government is limited to what can and cannot be changed when it comes to federal and provincial policies.

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 feel we have a great path system and being it was neglected is very concerning. We need to maintain and expand our path system to make it cover more areas and the paths need to be added to the transportation Master Plan once they amend the current one.

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

Again, many questions need to be answered before I can make a decision on this. Is the current leisure center over capacity? Does the current leisure center make a profit? Could other facilities like Crestwood Pool be upgraded to meet these needs? How would this affect other facilities like Crestwood Pool, Hill Pool? What would be the cost for new leisure center? What are the yearly operating costs? How does this affect the tax rate moving forward. Is there enough of a need for this facility to make a profit and make it self sustaining for annual costs?

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?

We have to work with our community partners and discuss funding and clearly communicate our funding limitations but always trying to balance fiscal responsibility with Community needs.

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

I don't know all the details behind this project and would need to look at the details to see if this is adding value or not before I support or not support it.

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

Honestly, I am not sure what the goal of this is, what this looks like or what is required to even get this started. I would need more information on this.

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?

This is an administrative responsibility. As a council member we could create a blanket policy that guides administration to deal with these types of problems. Ex: Public safety clauses stating emergency services need adequate ingress and egress into communities or create development standards policy to clearly state standards to address this from happening again.