



# **Kevin Monson**

2.	Campaign	Email -	For	Public	Distribution	
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kevinmonsonformhcouncil@gmail.com

#### 3. Campaign Website

N/A

#### 4. Campaign Social Media

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579383059669 Instagram-@kevinmonson4mhcouncil

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

My name is Kevin Monson and I am a lifelong hatter that cares deeply about making this city a better and more affordable place to live. How I hope to do that is by making informed decisions with my vote as councillor based on facts, evidence and public desire. I have nearly a decade of experience managing a high-volume adventure tourism business that has made me an expert communicator and a very capable leader. Currently I work at the Medicine Hat College in the library and as a part-time instructor, which has helped me become an effective learner and researcher which I think could help me to learn about issues facing Medicine Hat and how city council can help moving forward.

### 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 is limited but I am excited to learn as much as I can to make my time as councilor effective and efficient. I do have some committee experience with my time at Medicine Hat College as a part of Program Advisory Committees which I think could serve me well as councilor.

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

I have worked nearly my whole life in front-facing roles including 8 years as the manager of an adventure tourism business in the Cypress Hills. This safety-sensitive role required me to be an extremely effective communicator and a strong leader. I think this experience could serve me well on council to communicate clearly and professionally with council and the public and to make informed and effective decisions at the table. More than anything I consider myself a capable person, if you ask me to do something you can be assured I will get it done.

### 8. What is your leadership style?

I would consider myself a very participatory leader, I like to be involved in the work and I would never ask an employee to do something that I am not willing to do myself. I don't subscribe to authoritarian style leadership as I believe setting a good example and being respectful and supportive is far more effective.

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

I believe in setting realistic and achievable goals. My main goal for my term, if I am lucky enough to be elected, is to learn as much as I can about the process of local governance, and try my best to foster an environment of positivity not only between members of council but between council and the public as well. I hope to do this by getting out into the community and talking to people face-to-face, working to appreciate both our shared views and celebrate our differences.

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?

I hope to be judged on my ability to make informed decisions at the table, and I hope at the end of my term to be able to look bad and defend every single vote I have made and know that it was the right choice at the time.

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?

While my governance experience is limited, I am excited to learn more and consider myself a fast and effective learner. My communication skills on the other hand I would rate as very high, and I believe I am someone who is very easy to talk to, rely on and get along with through respectful and clear communication.

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?

I think collaboration at its core is a willingness to accept your own limitations, and being willing to seek out and accept help and knowledge from those around you, while also being forthright in your own strengths and being able to communicate them to others. I think respectful and effective communication is important in this regard to be able to share ideas and lean on those experts in our community or on council that can bring useful experience to the team.

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 (virtually) I believe 5 meetings in the last year, as well as viewed a few more from the last 4 years that had big decisions involved in the agenda. I also met with some current and previous councillors to ask them questions I had about the position before handing in my papers in August. These experiences were extremely helpful for me to get a good idea of what the role looks like and what would be expected of me should I get elected.

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?

For city councilors, I think if the public is on their side and chooses to elect them, how long they have served should not be a restriction. There is something to be said about a councilor with knowledge of past decisions and projects, and many projects can take years to come to fruition. I understand wanting a change but if someone gets the votes, I think it is reasonable to allow them to serve no matter how many terms they have under their belt.

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

I would love to see Medicine Hat become a place where people come to do business, vacation and raise families again. I would like to see more development and infrastructure downtown, including multi-use spaces and affordable housing. I would like to see a boost in locally owned small business, including tourism and recreation opportunities to give residents things to do and places to go to increase their quality of life in the city while providing local job opportunities.

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

I think being willing to meet with and have conversations with the public in an open and honest way should be a priority for the next city council. Whether that is in open town hall forums, small focus groups or one-on-one meetings I think having respectful and friendly face-time with council could go a long way in regaining public trust.

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

Governance vs. operations is an important distinction in any organization. I think that council decisions should be made in an honest and informed way to have a vision for the city and what our priorities should be for the future. City management then needs to work to carry out this vision to the best of their ability, all while maintaining an open dialogue to maintain accountability and measure success. At the same time, operational staff do need to maintain some form of autonomy built on trust, as city council getting bogged down trying to get involved in operations can greatly hinder efficiency and success.

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

Right now I don't believe Medicine Hat is big enough to require a ward system, as some neighbourhoods could see very few candidates come forward and this could result in residents having fewer good choices for councilors. That being said, once council is elected I would be open to having councilors assigned to different areas of the city, with their area of residence taking priority to ensure assigned councilors are invested in that area as much as possible.

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

Currently I am employed at the Medicine Hat College, however I am ready and willing to devote as much time as required to fulfill my role of councilor should I be elected.

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

I would have chosen not to sanction the mayor as they did. I know there were issues that needed addressing with some of the events that transpired, but in my opinion these sanctions greatly reduced the efficiency of the council by wasting much time and resources that were devoted to this issue.

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

I think internal conflicts between council members and city staff greatly reduced the effectiveness of the previous council. I think by dismissing the CAO and a new council starting fresh will greatly help them to move forward in a positive way. Disagreements are a part of every democracy, but maintaining professionalism and respect moving forward, while following code of conduct changes will really help the next council to focus on the work and not get distracted by any future conflicts.

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?

Being a parent in 2025 you are constantly bombarded with conflicting information on what is considered safe, whether it is related to feeding, sleep, hygiene or healthcare. My philosophy is to follow evidence based research as best as I can to make informed decisions on best practices for safety for my child.

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

I believe both city council and the public should always strive to engage in a professional and respectful manner, whether in public or online. That being said, I think as representatives of the city and its residents, members of the city council should certainly be held to a higher standard of professionalism in public.

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 believe wholeheartedly with owning up to your mistakes. Only by accepting and addressing our mistakes are we able to possibly fix them, or at least learn and grow from them.

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?

Repeated question 12

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

Having a positive attitude and clear communication style is important in building relationships, but also being willing to respect and accept differing points of view is also important. I think in local government building and maintaining relationships among stakeholders, city staff and the public is extremely important and something any city council member should make a priority. To hold myself accountable for this I plan to get myself out in the community as much as possible to meet and build relationships with local stakeholders and gain important perspective on what council can do to help our city.

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?

I think advocacy to higher levels of government is a major responsibility of the city council. Decisions made at the provincial and federal level have far reaching impacts in our community, particularly when it comes to affordability (i.e. rental caps, insurance premiums, healthcare and education). City council needs to be a strong advocate for our community to hold higher levels of government accountable for these decisions, and I think that whenever possible councilors and the mayor need to communicate the needs of the community in a professional and clear way to our ministers, MLAs and MPs. That being said, council needs to be careful to keep the relationship with higher levels of government from becoming too adversarial, as this can damage public trust, relationships and undermine the work to increase our residents quality of life.

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

I think the recent creation of the Southeast Alberta Economic Opportunity Advocacy Committee is a positive step in the right direction to increase cooperation in the region, and my hope for the next council is to use this committee as a resource to share ideas, develop projects and further goals in the area for all.

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 definitely understand wanting to commit to lowering or freezing taxes. However, I don't believe that is something a candidate can promise as we don't have all of the information, there are considerations for inflationary and other costs, and some of the property tax increases (education portion) are provincially mandated. So, if I am elected I would of course work to keep taxes low, but I can't commit to or promise anything else at this time.

30.Most candidates tend to say "I won't raise taxes". How do yo<mark>u plan to</mark> support essential programs as services with less money?

See above question

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

I think lowering business tax rates could be risky as it could negatively affect residential taxes. That being said, I am in favour of working to implement other economic incentives to stimulate business growth (i.e off-site levy payment plans, reduced development fees, application and permitting assistance).

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

I hope to support small businesses to start or expand in our city through fee restructuring and application support. Not only could this attract business and more taxes, but with additional retail, tourism, recreation and service businesses that are locally owned, quality of life could greatly increase in Medicine Hat and therefore attract new residents.

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?

See Question 31

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

Working within our budgetary needs is a very tough balance, and through stakeholder and public engagement I hope the next city council can work to determine which projects to move forward on that will benefit our community while staying fiscally responsible.

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

See question 31. Also, rent freezes are provincially mandated and unfortunately outside city council control. I do believe more can be done to support renters though by holding large corporate landlords accountable for the living conditions in their units.

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

The nice thing about having a council of 9 is that ideology can take a back seat. Clear communication and positive collaboration will aid to ensure public trust in decision making and governance.

# 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?

Councilors and the Mayor are not experts in every field, I think relying and learning from outside consulting is very important in informed decision making, so we do not waste precious time and taxpayer money on projects that are not viable.

### 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?

Division Ave is obviously a contentious issue for many, and while pedestrian safety I do believe has benefitted, it is clear the narrow roads have caused some headaches for larger vehicles.

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

What's done is done and I do not support spending any more money on trying to fix the design as this could be very expensive and hopefully we will learn from our mistakes in future projects.

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

I am very hesitant to support an MCC as the transition and staffing costs could be extensive and I am not convinced we would see a return on our investment. Also once this decision is made there would be no going back if it was the wrong decision.

#### 41. What are your views on the solar project?

If it is determined that it will be mostly economically viable, I fully support the project to move forward with stage 1 to start, as diversifying our energy portfolio could greatly reduce our exposure to market fluctuations for commodities and set us up for possible lower utility costs in the future.

# 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?

This is obviously the hope, but as with taxes I am unable to promise anything as we don't have all of the information and future market factors are outside of our control in many ways. But I believe avoiding an MCC could greatly help to keep our costs down in the future.

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

I do not support selling our utilities.

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

Municipal control over these issues is limited, but supporting local programs that do amazing work in our community in regards to homelessness and mental health should be a priority for the next city council. Also ensuring we do all we can to open an overnight shelter with on-site supports could go a long way to helping.

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

Again, some is outside our control but doing all we can to address affordability, support for local programs and fostering a stronger sense of community are some ways city council can work towards to help.

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

Any location would pose its challenges, as local business and resident conflicts can pose a strong opposition wherever it is. But a mostly central location close to transit and services, and hopefully with onsite mental health, employment and food services should be the goal.

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

I am fine with federal, provincial and municipal flags, and I don't have any opposition to special interests groups requesting flying additional flags, as long as council approves them by vote.

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

I am in favour of backyard hens for residents, as long as reasonable limits on activities, numbers and coops are set.

# 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?

Owning our own utilities, being a major corridor to Saskatchewan, Calgary and the USA and being the sunniest city in Canada are in my opinion the Medicine Hat Advantage. I believe that in the coming years Medicine Hat should develop a marketing initiative to try and attract new residents and businesses.

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

I have more to learn on this topic, but I have heard the idea of not filling some retirement positions to avoid having layoffs, and if this is operationally viable I would support this type of change.

# 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 think this could pose high operational and logistic challenges, but I am very much in favour of supporting local small businesses any way I can.

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

Housing monopolies are a major problem in my opinion. I think working to diversify our housing stock could go a long way to helping this. Community housing, housing co-ops and other non-marker solutions could help. I also think holding large corporate landlords accountable for the living conditions in their units should also be a priority, as having affordable and dignified apartment style housing is a factor in attracting new residents and businesses.

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

Focus on our great location, low utilities, sunny weather! Also I love that Medicine Hat has a small town feel with city amenities and focusing on this could attract many new residents!

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

I am not against remote work as it can help employees with childcare and transportation costs. However, I do believe city employees should be residents of Medicine Hat as a requirement whenever possible.

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

I think supporting marginalized groups is extremely important, and promoting community programs and a sense of belonging for all is an easy way for the city council to make it clear that all are welcome in our city.

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

See question 32

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

I think a collaborative approach is necessary for most projects, and engaging with local stakeholders and experts to make informed decisions should be a driving factor for any infrastructure plans for the future.

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

Supporting workers is extremely important and I think any large economic development deals or projects should come with a caveat to produce a set number of good paying, full time jobs to receive incentives.

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

This is quite a broad question, and I don't have anything against non-union organizations per se, as long as they treat their employees fairly and pay a fair wage. That being said, I do support unions and collective bargaining and believe unions are an important part of workers rights progress historically.

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?

N/A as I am not a Mayoral candidate, but I fully support access and maintenance of our outdoor 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 think planning for addressing these issues now will be an important part of our ability to manage them in the future. We know that future water availability could be an issue, and working on plans with surrounding communities and upstream stakeholders to closely monitor our resources should be something we prioritize moving forward. Also looking to transition what we can to renewable energy when possible not only will diversify our infrastructure and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, it is important as we need to do our part to reduce our contribution to global emissions.

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

I think supporting small businesses is important, as this creates jobs and gives us more retail, tourism and services to increase our quality of life in the city which is a major factor in keeping young residents and families. Affordable housing is something to focus on as well so young people do not feel priced out of a place to call home. Also ensuring access to natural and outdoor spaces is an important factor in attracting young residents so this should also be something to focus on.

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

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 think environmental stewardship is extremely important. I have a degree in Ecotourism and Outdoor Leadership and a large focus of that program is treating the surrounding natural space as a resource in need of preservation and I think this thinking can be expanded to nearly all aspects of life. All future projects and initiatives should consider environmental impacts when discussing viability as engaging in unsustainable activities may provide benefits in the short term, they will come with consequences for our children and future residents.

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?

I think there is a place for these programs in certain industries that are considered essential or that have real issues in finding workers (i.e. agriculture). However I do believe these programs are greatly taken advantage of and this has resulted in not only reduced work and pay for locals, but the workers hired by these programs can be greatly taken advantage of as well.

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 providing proper bike lanes and trails are important as they can help reduce traffic, provide safety for cyclists and support a healthy lifestyle for residents. I think it can be a fine balance to support bike lanes without overly inconveniencing motorists so I would likely prefer the city prioritize self contained bike trails as feel like it is a better use of resources.

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

I am fully supportive of recreation in the city, I would however want to make sure the next council ensures any future facilities are affordable and won't put undue burden on residents in tax increases.

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?

Many of these community organizations rely on funding from the province, and any cuts to provincial funding can put undue stress on municipalities to pick up the slack. I believe the next city council should advocate strongly to the province to maintain reliable and predictable funding to these important programs, as the province has the resources to provide and sometimes the cities do not.

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

I am in favour of developing more composting options for the city, but I will have to learn more about the impacts of paying another organization to handle it for us, as this could provide an opportunity for collaboration but I could cost more than we'd like

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

I think intergenerational living and learning is an important part of fostering a strong sense of community. I would love to see local schools run programs in cooperation with senior living facilities to give a chance for youth and seniors to engage in combined activities or events.

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?

I can understand that only having one entrance to an area this size could be very frustrating. I do think this is something that the next council should address as soon as possible to provide an alternative route to reduce congestion in the area.