

AUPE Municipal Election Survey 2021 - Dale Leier

Privatization, including P3s:

1. As a general principal I would approach all opportunities to privatize with an open mind. I recognize the interests of unionized employees to focus on job and income preservation, but every situation is different. Factors that need to be considered is the distorting effect on local labour markets that municipalities can incur in the short term, while the long-term consequences of over-employment in the public sector can create a burden on municipal finances that may become unsustainable. As we have seen recently in Lethbridge with our transit and policing, ideas for efficiency improvements rarely make their way up the pecking order proving yet again why governments frequently fail as effective service providers.

With regards to P3's, this is often an effective way for municipalities to increase the quantity and quality of public assets and facilities while controlling spending and debt. Given the interest of pension funds and enterprises whose shares are held in mutual funds and RRSPs, P3's represents additional opportunities to sustain the income of unionized Retirees and their heirs.

Municipalities as employers:

2. I will support our employees with competitive wages and benefits, full-time hours where practical, job security where possible, and collective bargaining rights.
3. Unfortunately, this question is out of scope as municipalities are not in any position to oppose provincial legislation. Municipalities need the flexibility to work within the context of local circumstances for the best interests of the entire community within the laws of the land.

Funding:

4. I propose to deal with funding shortfalls and cuts by seeking funding from senior levels of government downloading responsibilities onto local government. We should all seek cuts to wasteful spending such as vanity programs meant only to enhance the legacy of elected officials. There is also a 3rd option to facilitate increased public sector spending, without increasing taxes, and that is to grow the tax base through incentivizes for economic development and growth.

COVID-19 Safety:

5. I encourage better education and incentives to promote safe social practices where possible to preclude more onerous actions. Should these prove to be insufficient, however, I support all reasonable measures including mask mandates, vaccine "passports" and vaccine mandates to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Lethbridge, if Provincial Legislation has also proven to be insufficient to controlling the spread of the disease.

Affordability:

6. There is a bit of a circular logic to the question that cannot be ignored. Residents also pay property taxes which tend to be regressive in nature for lower income workers. Shifting the cost of transit ridership from users to property owners is, at best, a zero-sum game. A better option would be to provide reduced fees to low-income passengers and thereby ensure appropriate access while providing an incentive to limit use for necessary purposes only.