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Ward O-day'min

Privatization, including P3s:

AUPE members know very well that privatization regularly fails to find “efficiencies” and any cost savings are often off the backs of workers who become de-unionized, with lower pay and benefits.

They also work on the front lines of service delivery and see the problems caused by high-turnover low wage private providers, and the bureaucratic burden caused by having to deal with a third party instead of an in-house provider.

1. Will you oppose privatization of municipal services and infrastructure, including Public-Private-Partnerships aka P3s? Will you support bringing previously privatized services in-house?

I am opposed to P3s. I do not believe that our municipal government should be engaging in P3 agreements. There is more than sufficient evidence to show that P3s often result in lower wages for employees of the private companies and higher costs for the municipality. What's more when private corporations fail to deliver it is the city who is left cleaning up the mess. I want to see us engaging in publicly funded projects that benefit our community and the people who live in it. That means job and apprenticeship opportunities for Edmontonians, fair wages for the people working on those projects and accountability to the people of the city.

Municipalities as employers:

As our economies recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, good jobs are an important factor. Public sector workers spend in their communities, and many households impacted by private sector recessions have been able to keep the bills paid thanks to a stable public sector job.

2. Will you support your employees and your community by ensuring the municipality employs staff with living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights?

Absolutely. As a city and a community we must be committed to living wages, fairness in the workplace and the ability of employees to collectively bargain.

3. Will you oppose attempts from the provincial government to legislate against municipal staff including cuts to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, or restrictions on their right to strike?

Absolutely. The provincial government should have no ability to change pensions that were bargained collectively or to restrict the right to strike.

Funding:

For decades the trend on public services has been cuts and defunding, with fees downloaded onto workers, and the tax burden shifted away from the wealthy and corporations to the working class. At the same time, workers in the public sector know that tax freezes and cuts mean cuts to services and jobs. Any promise political candidates make can only be realized through proper revenues.

4. How do you propose your municipality deal with funding shortfalls, cuts, and downloading of responsibilities from federal and provincial governments? Do you favour spending cuts over tax increases?

No, I do not favour spending cuts over tax increases. I believe that most people understand costs have increased, while the provincial government has downloaded costs to the municipalities. We must advocate for greater support from the province. We must be fiscally responsible stewards of our city but not through cutting services, wages or employees. Edmontonians are reasonable people who will appreciate consultation in these processes and they will accept increased taxes as long as they can see that we are maintaining services and treating our civic employees fairly.

With the negligent provincial response to now three preventable waves of COVID-19, municipalities have been put in an awkward position of needing to take measures to protect their citizens throughout the pandemic. Many are introducing measures of their own, but not all have.

5. Do you support measures such as mask mandates, vaccine “passports”, and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your municipality?

I am seriously disappointed in our provincial government’s handling of the pandemic and the downloading of responsibilities to the municipalities. I fully supported our city’s approach to implement a mask mandate and vaccine passports when our Premier failed to do so. I believe the city is taking the right approach by asking all employees to take a vaccine yet agreeing to make accommodations for those who are unable to get the vaccine for medical or religious reasons.

Affordability:

With workers squeezed by increasing costs, municipal fees add to the burden. Service fees are a form of flat tax that require the same payment from a CEO as a low income worker. Transit affordability is an important piece of working class equity. Fees add an extra burden for many people who can not afford the costs of private transportation in the first place. The reduced emissions on increasing transit ridership can also be a part of how cities take positive action on climate change.

6. Do you support measures to reduce municipal reliance on services fees and fares, such as eliminating transit fares?

Reducing and eventually eliminating transit fees is a goal to which we should be working. If we wish to encourage more transit ridership we must make it more affordable and accessible, while also making it an environmentally friendly choice. As a councillor I would ask that a study be conducted, along with public consultation, to determine how we can reduce and eliminate transit fees - along with a reasonable timeline - while protecting jobs and fair wages of the transit workers.

Thank you for participating in this survey from AUPE’s Committee On Political Action. The Committee is asking for all surveys to be completed by Tuesday, September 28. Please send your responses or any questions of your own to AUPE via email at t.tangedal@aupe.org. The committee intends to publish the responses (or lack thereof) during the week of October 4.

COVID-19 Safety:

With the negligent provincial response to now three preventable waves of COVID-19, municipalities have been put in an awkward position of needing to take measures to protect their citizens throughout the pandemic. Many are introducing measures of their own, but not all have.