

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 Thursday, September 30**. Please send your responses or any questions of your own to AUPE via **email at t.zimmerman@aupe.org**

The committee intends to publish the responses (or lack thereof) during the week of October 4.

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?

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?
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?

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?

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.

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?

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?



AUPE SURVEY

Kayla Blanchette – Town of Bonnyville Councillor Candidate

1. I am committed to asking essential questions, listening, learning, and advocating for the best interests of our municipality. There are many essential questions to be asked and considered by Members of Council regarding any proposals of privatization relating to municipal services and infrastructure. One example would be what are the impacts of privatization on the local economy and on workers' jobs, pay, and benefits? In order to provide a definitive position, I would need to be provided with all the relevant information.
2. I will always be in support of our municipality's employees and what is in their best interests to ensure quality of life and prosperity.
3. I fully support unions and am committed to lobbying other levels of government to ensure our municipal staff maintain their union benefits.
4. I believe a feasible plan for funding shortfalls is to create an attractive investment environment within our community, while also ensuring that our existing investment, survives. We can continue to keep our taxes low for our local businesses, which in turn can assist with their growth and job creation. We want our municipality to be a community of choice, so seeking investment in our community and attracting and retaining residents seems like a win-win. I look forward to hearing the positions of other council members and engaging in these discussions.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly not been easy on anyone, and I particularly empathize with our local businesses as they navigate through the province's most recent Restrictions Exemption Program. I think it is unfortunate that the province chose to put this hardship on municipalities and local businesses, given that Public Health falls under provincial jurisdiction and any mandates in that respect would need to be made at a provincial level. In terms of whether I am in favour of vaccine "passports", I personally believe in choice; however, in making the choice to remain unvaccinated and maintaining that right to choose, one has a responsibility to ensure the health of their community. I believe in following the guidance of Alberta Health Services and, first and foremost, I will always be in favour of putting our community's health and safety at the forefront of any decisions, whether we are in a pandemic or otherwise.
6. I do not believe our municipality necessarily relies on fees for service, certainly not any transit fares, given that we simply do not have municipal transit in our community. I will always be open to discussing programming within our municipality to make our community a better place for all residents.