

Kimberly Feser responses
Candidate for Calgary City Council Ward 9

function of the hospital. I believe if your position can do harm to the city functions or your position has the potential to put people in crisis, I would support that legislation. LAPP is covered by many many union groups. The only way I support any change to the LAPP is it being incorporated in an Alberta Pension Plan Like the one in Quebec.

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?

No, I can not at this time say I could support this. Calgary needs an overhaul of the budget. P3's are a great way to reduce the tax dollars spent on these initiatives.

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?

As a former union employee with HSAA, I know how important the collective bargaining agreements are and job security. Full-time hours unfortunately cannot come down to “if desired” the FTE's that are available should be based on work available and budget. I agree living wages are very important, but if you are in a Casual position within the union it is hard to guarantee, based on my experience.

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?

The right to strike was taken away from HSAA because the roles as such would disable the

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?

I do support spending cuts where justified, as long as the impact does not cause harm or cause slower response from our union employees to the people who require the services. Continual tax increases are forcing our seniors out of their homes. Calgary has the highest tax rate (besides Edmonton) when compared to other western Canadian cities including Vancouver. Unchallenged ongoing tax increases cannot continue.

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?

I believe that the City mandating vaccines is an overstep of the city administration and should have not been passed off from the council. I believe in your freedom of choice over your body. I myself have been vaccinated and encourage all to do so, but I do not believe a forced situation is tolerable. Covid has shown our ability to work from home and cohorts. The city could put this in place while not infringing on your freedoms and rights. I don't believe in the vaccine passport 1. It does not allow for people who are unable to be vaccinated to enter facilities and 2. It is sharing personal information i.e. triple shot can mean higher risk or different vaccines used. I believe

while we are under a high risk situation (as we are in the 4th wave) the masks help stop the spread, when numbers reduce the mask bylaw should be rescinded when the province says to do so, except for transit and high use areas under municipal jurisdiction.

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?

As much as I would like to see this happen, I would rather continue to see a sliding scale. With purchase of the transit passes through the technologies available instead of being at the local stores. Basing the scale on students, low income and seniors. This will continue to be a way at helping reduce traffic and creating more reliance on transit.