

Marissa Black responses

Candidate for Lethbridge City Council

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 will oppose privatization and support bringing previously privatized services in house. Everybody, regardless of who they are, deserves to have access to the services they need. Governments have a responsibility to their citizens to ensure they can access services to have their basic needs met. Policies should be put in place to ensure every citizen is treated equally and has equal opportunity in life. By using in house services governments not only provide jobs, but ensure upkeep is considered and carried out.

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?

Yes. These are rights all workers should have.

3. Will you oppose the 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?

Yes.

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

I favor tax increases. After the past year everyone has felt the effect of spending cuts. Unfortunately, if the government cuts spending, services may not be upkept to an appropriate level. Taxes are used to provide services for the people who pay for them. Low-income people may feel this is unfair or biased. I believe that this is a direct result of question 2, where we need to be supporting workers with living wages, so they are not negatively affected by an increase in taxes. I would also support a taxation structure based on income level. Unless there is no other choice, spending cuts would be a last resort mechanism for me.

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?

Yes. The current provincial government has put the onus on businesses to decide whether to put in restrictions such as vaccine "passports." This is unfair, and irresponsible because children under the age of 12 can still not be vaccinated. Masking should be the bare minimum restrictions put in place to ensure the safety of high-risk individuals, such as immunocompromised and elderly, and those who cannot be vaccinated, such as children. Vaccine passports both help to limit the spread of the virus and incentivize unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated. I believe in the scientific evidence pointing towards masking and vaccines and stand with implementing these measures to keep our citizens safe.

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

Yes. Part of my platform includes making services accessible for everyone, regardless of their ability or financial status. Eliminating transit fares would allow every person living in Lethbridge to maintain their independence and ensure nobody had to choose between ability to move around the city or other resources such as food.