

**Melissa J. Erickson responses**  
**Candidate for Grande Prairie City Council**

With regards to privatization and the potential to oppose new privatization or support bringing back previously privatized services, I can really only say that it depends. If I am elected to City Council, I believe the best thing I could do would be to come to the table with an open mind and do my best to consult and collaborate with stakeholders or otherwise interested parties when any decisions regarding privatization have to be made. However, I can say that as a student, I spent 5 summers working for municipalities in their Public Works departments, sometimes under union-negotiated contracts, and I was extremely grateful for the stability, hours, and living wages I received during those periods. I am very aware of these considerations and would call upon my own experiences when working together to come up with solutions.

In cases of funding shortfalls or cuts from the provincial/federal government, I believe the City needs to be creative in increasing revenue streams that can help make up for any shortfalls. If City Council and other organizations can get together to come up with creative, out of the box type solutions that could help prevent both spending cuts and tax increases then these solutions need to be explored. While I don't pretend to have all of the solutions by any means, I believe that the new perspectives that will inevitably accompany the addition of *at least* 4 new persons to City Council can only benefit the residents and organizations in our City.

When it comes to affordability of municipal services and reducing municipal reliance on service fees, I do believe that it is important to ensure services such as public transportation remain accessible to as many individuals as possible. This includes not only the traditional transit, but also the accessible transportation program. Grande Prairie does already maintain the transit access program for 50% off fees for eligible individuals, which includes even further reduced fees for individuals who receive AISH. However, if it is feasible to extend these programs to increase accessibility in our City, especially without additional tax burdens, then I believe that this should be a priority.