

## Ryan Parker responses

### Candidate for Lethbridge City Council

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 deunionized, 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?

We have to trust and support the work of unions. Unions/organized labour have historical knowledge which cannot be measured by dollars and cents. Privatization most often can end up being more costly. More costly meaning that hidden costs are often realized after the decision of privatization is made. I also believe ethically that unions deserve more say when the decisions are made. Their knowledge should be seen as a true asset. The idea of P's is a relatively new concept. I'm very cautious in the model. Historically there hasn't been enough data to show the true success. I would support bringing previously privatized services in house. I'm glad to see this has actually occurred over the past year.

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?

Every employee deserves a living wage. It's also important that employees feel a great sense of security in job retention. The ability to have full time hours and collective bargaining rights are also very crucial. Doing all this shows sincere respect.

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?

100 % Yes I will

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?

Communities truly value the services that are delivered from the public sector. Municipalities must strongly advocate against any cuts or downloading from other orders of government. I would rather see tax increases or other forms of revenue generation before essential services cut.

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?

It is unfortunate that we are in this current situation. These mandates and passports are set in place by the provincial government and are adopted by municipalities. I believe that the concerns, and challenges facing our staff should also be addressed. Collaboration between all staff is key.

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 cannot 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?

Services require funding. I am open to various financial models and programs to support burden reduction of those that find it difficult to afford the services. The community must shift the mindset on transit. Caring and helping the ones that don't have the financial means should be of highest priority. If more people can afford and have the ability to use public transportation, it's a win for both the user and the environment.