

Defining a Process for Electorate Information

Issue(s): *The Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce has received concerns that residents of the City of Medicine Hat, particularly the business community, do not have an easily accessible or available source of information relating to election candidates regarding their policies, positions, and platforms and therefore may not have the appropriate information to assist in their voting decision.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has been discussion from the business community over the past several years regarding the ability to decipher which election candidates have a “pro business” platform. Additionally, many candidates may state their specific platform is pro-business, however without a reliable source of data or information to substantiate these platforms, the electorate often bases their decisions on the perception, rather than on factual information. To provide a fair, transparent and reliable source of information to the voting public, the Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce will provide and publish a brief summary of each incumbent’s attendance records at Council and at Committee meetings, as well as disclose how each candidate voted on key business-related issues during their time on Council. Additionally, the Chamber of Commerce will request information from new candidates on their policies, positions, platforms and recommended course of action each candidate proposes that can be publicly distributed to the electorate.

BACKGROUND

Leading up to previous municipal elections, the Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce has hosted Election Forums to assist in educating members on the candidates’ political stances. However, the forum format only provides a snapshot of the candidates’ positions and platforms, as there is limited time and opportunity to ask all the questions necessary to make an informed voting decision.

What has been observed through the years is that the electorate base their voting decision on word of mouth, tenure on council and other aspects of the individuals running for election, which may not fully provide the opportunity to vote based on factual information, rather they are voting based on personal opinion and perception.

ANALYSIS

To ensure an environment of fair, transparent and reliable information on candidate, a document is required in which an incumbent’s track record on council would be highlighted , as well as information related to new candidates’ policies and positions. This document would provide an accurate source of information for the Chamber’s members and the electorate as they prepare to vote in future municipal elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce:

1. Prepare and publish a document that highlights new and incumbent candidates’ policies, priorities and action plans that they will commit to for their elected term.

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Date Amended: September 18, 2013