



**Union of Northern
Workers & the
Thebacha Chamber of
Commerce present**

Fort Smith Municipal Election All Candidates Forum

Each Candidate was provided the opportunity to submit a profile and introduction to be published in advance of the Candidates Forum, October 1, 2018, starting at 7 PM, and asked to answer the following questions.

1. What is the one thing you would like to accomplish during your term?
2. What does leadership mean to you? What are your leadership qualities? Define your style of leadership.
3. How is it possible for property owners to accumulate such large tax arrears? What will be your strategy for collection to prevent this from happening in the future?
4. In your opinion, what are the Town's immediate and long term infrastructure needs?
5. Are you willing to cut spending to keep taxes from increasing? What cuts to services would you make?
6. If a property tax exempt home owner runs a home based business, should they lose their property tax exemption? Why?
7. **Mayoral Candidates Only Question:** What arrangements will be made with your employer so that you are available in town hall during business hours? What will your town hall schedule be?

Candidate's responses were compiled into this document exactly as submitted. The responses are in the order they were received. First to last. If you have a question for the candidates, please send them to thebachachamber@gmail.com. Questions will be put in a hat to be drawn at random.

Separator Page

My Name is Keith Hartery and I have been a resident of Fort Smith for 14 years. I believe in building a stronger community by becoming involved in the groups that helps make this town such a great place to live. During my time here, I have served on the Library Board, Recreation Advisory Board, Northern Life Museum Board and helped establish the Fort Smith Food Bank. Today, I am on the Sustainable Development Advisory Board which advises Council on ways to guide our community toward a greener and more sustainable future. I hope to put this experience to work for all residents of Fort Smith as a member of Town Council.

1) What is the one thing you would like to accomplish during your term?

The one thing I would like to accomplish during my term is to ensure Fort Smith remains the education capital of the Northwest Territories.

And I will not only want to keep what educational programs we have but advocate for having more programs brought to Fort Smith.

2) What does leadership mean to you? What are your leadership qualities? Define your style of leadership.

Leadership in Fort Smith is being able to guide all the different interests of a community towards a positive and beneficial outcome. My leadership qualities are being able to inspire others, honesty, commitment and compassion for all residents of Fort Smith. My leadership style is to understand the challenges of Fort Smith and make a decision that will benefit the community once all the relevant information has been collected.

3) How is it possible for property owners to accumulate such large tax arrears? What will be your strategy for collection to prevent this from happening in the future?

I am very interested in finding out more about the issue of property owners accumulating large tax arrears. I would like to review the tools at hand to collect tax arrears and determine whether or not they are sufficient. If they are not, then I would like to work with the Mayor and Council in creating by-laws that effectively deal with the issue of back taxes.

4) In your opinion, what are the Town's immediate and long term infrastructure needs?

The town's immediate infrastructure needs are upgrading the town's sewer system and ensuring the Recreation Centre retrofit is completed in a timely and efficient manner.

The town's long-term infrastructure needs are investigating the options to either retrofit or replace the library, town hall and fire hall.

5) Are you willing to cut spending to keep taxes from increasing? What cuts to services would you make?

The issue of cutting spending to keep taxes from increasing needs further investigation. I do not believe the town is spending money inappropriately but it always helps to review how our tax dollars are being spent. I do know that Fort Smith residents enjoy and appreciate a good quality of life and I do not want to compromise that.

6) If a property tax exempt home owner runs a home based business, should they lose their property tax exemption? Why?

As a member of town council, I would examine how many home based business exist and determine whether or not they merit tax exempt status on a case by case base. We do not want to discourage entrepreneurs but we do want to encourage the growth of our tax base.

Separator Page

Ray Currie: I am eighty years old and have lived in Ft. Smith for more than half my life. I taught at JBT until my retirement. I served on the ambulance crew for over twenty years; in the last number of years as an EMTRS. I taught St. John First Aid for over 10 years. I have been an active member of St. Joseph's Cathedral Parish ever since I arrived here and have spent the last four and a half years as Chair Person of the Parish Council. At the present time I spend two hours a day as a volunteer at the Northern Life Museum. I am what you might call a young elder. I feel I have the ability and the necessary energy to serve the public as a councillor.

My comments on the questions asked:

Question 1: I would like to see the Mayor and council be more open to what is happening . A Facebook entry weekly may be the solution.

Question 2: A leader should listen to his/her council before making decisions. I prefer a consensus manner of leadership, rather than a we/ them system.

Question 3: I firmly believe that any outstanding arrears should be dealt with firmly. The owners should be given a set amount of time to pay the assigned amount. At the end of the time allowed, if not paid, the property should be an object of forfeiture and placed up for auction.

Question 4: The infrastructure should be clearly stated. Each department head should make the necessary decisions in his/her department and bring any necessary results to council for approval. The mayor should not have to make day to day decisions on the running of the town staff.

Question 5: YES! But only if the cuts would not hinder the over-all good of the Town. For example, it might be sufficient to have Home garbage collection only once as week. The savings could be used in other areas.

Business garbage collection would have to be discussed with the involved business concerns.

Question 6:

Yes. A business is a business. How can one business be given a grant of tax-free operation while another has to cover theirs by paying Municipal taxes.

Separator Page

Fort Smith Municipal Election - All Candidates Forum

presented by the Union of Northern Workers and the Thebacha Chamber of Commerce

Candidate: Michael Couvrette

Introduction

I have called Fort Smith home since moving here in 1986. I am a long-term northern resident of 48 years and have resided in multiple communities across the NWT and what is now Nunavut since 1970, when my family brought me to the north.

I previously served on Fort Smith's town council in the mid 1990's for 1 term.

I am retired from the GNWT and spend much of my time focused on operating an alpaca farm and related agricultural activities with my wife Helena. My other time-consuming passion is serving as the chairperson of the Thebacha & Wood Buffalo Astronomical Society and as a volunteer coordinator for the society's annual Dark Sky Festival and other activities.

I serve as a committee member on the town's Tourism and Trade Advisory Board. In the past I also participated on several boards as an individual, as a representative of a government or town council. These included: Northern Life Museum, NWT Tourism, Fort Smith Health & Social Services, Chamber of Commerce.

Questions:

1) What is the one thing you would like to accomplish during your term?

To see Fort Smith take positive steps to become a more economically diversified and sustainable community.

This can be achieved by marketing our community as a favourable and affordable place to set up or relocate businesses by highlighting our affordable cost-of-living, showcasing the abundance of recreational and excellent lifestyle opportunities, and by developing other incentives. Initially, we should focus on targeting small businesses that can easily operate remotely and are based on things like emerging technologies, e-commerce, distance education, freelance design and content, website design and hosting.

For people willing to invest their time and energy, Fort Smith has economic opportunities in tourism and hospitality, providing services to community residents in the trades, transportation, and alternative energy - and the list goes on.

As well, the community needs a robust and dynamic strategy to deal with the territorial government's existing plans to erode our community's position as the post-secondary education centre of the NWT. It also needs our leadership to address the covert and less obvious trend of redeploying key government positions to other communities.

A crucial step in moving towards a sustainable and vibrant economic base for our community will be the creation of a new and dynamic “community vision.”

A “vision” is an important part of the process of becoming a sustainable community. It allows residents to look into the future, think creatively and ask themselves what they want their community to be in 20 or 30 years. A vision describes an ideal picture. The vision guides goal-setting, policies and actions by providing context for understanding community concerns, prioritizing issues, determining action steps and identifying indicators to measure progress.

2) What does leadership mean to you? What are your leadership qualities? Define your style of leadership.

Leadership is the ability to motivate people to take ownership of and to mobilize their energies behind a vision, mission or ideal. All mayoral candidates should be able to clearly explain what their vision is for our community. A good standard of living and a healthy vibrant community is not a “vision” – it is what a mayor and council are obligated to do.

My leadership style and ability to motivate people is based on my capacity to visualize and develop a sound and rational progression plan to move a vision or idea from its conception to implementation and delivery. Plans or strategies require that thoughtful consideration be given to all facets of the how, who and when aspects, as well as the short/long term financial implications and other matters that will affect the plan and its final product. A plan or strategy must be flexible to allow for changes that may result from a variety of outside influences.

As a councillor, good leadership qualities are not a compulsory prerequisite. What a good councillor requires is the skills and ability to hear and understand the concerns of the community, to bring those to the attention of the mayor and other councillors and, where appropriate enact policies, directives and activities that ultimately benefit the entire community.

3) How is it possible for property owners to accumulate such large tax arrears? What will be your strategy for collection to prevent this from happening in the future?

There are 2 primary reasons for property owners to accumulate tax arrears.

The first and most obvious is a person’s inability to meet or fulfill their financial obligations. The reasons behind this are many and may be beyond the control of the individual. In these cases, town administration should review the account and the underlying circumstances so that remedy programs can be worked out. In severe cases, the town administration may want to recommend a deferment or write-off of the accounts to mayor and council.

The second and more troublesome reason of indebtedness to the Town is where a person has made a conscious decision not to fulfill their financial obligations for whatever reason. For these accounts, the individual needs to present their argument for non-payment which needs to be assessed and properly documented. Appropriate collection action must be initiated in a timely manner either through mutually agreed to terms or a collection service. If needed, the town should seek a legal judgement with imposed conditions.

Michael Couvrette

4) In your opinion, what are the Town's immediate and long term infrastructure needs?

With the arena's recent upgrade, and plans and funding already in place to renovate the Recreation Centre, our community's primary recreational facilities are in good shape. Without being overly familiar with the town's current 5-year capital plan and overall financial position, I am reluctant to suggest we invest in new, non-critical infrastructure that will need additional resources and funding to operate and maintain.

With this in mind, the upcoming priorities for mayor and councils will be to deal with the unglamorous task of dealing with our aged, unseen and essential infrastructure. This includes water and sewer services (pipe replacement and upgrades) and resurfacing roads, municipal service buildings such as the library which is nearing the end of its service life-cycle and needs either a substantial retro-fit or replacement. Town Hall could use improvement to include council chambers that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Town has set in motion improvements to the community's parks and playgrounds. These projects need to move forward if we want to establish our community as a great place to live for our residents, encourage our college and university graduates to return and raise their families here and, to attract new people into our community – realizing a significant goal of growing our community.

The community is in dire need of business support infrastructure which could include an incubator mall and support program for small and emerging business. In most cases this would not typically be something a municipal government would build. Here is an opportunity for the town to facilitate a process and possibly provide incentives for private sector or other community or territorial governments to invest in and develop.

5) Are you willing to cut spending to keep taxes from increasing? What cuts to services would you make?

Yes. To say otherwise demonstrates a poor understanding of the principles of sound municipal and corporate management. Reducing spending and increasing taxes are not the only viable solutions to having a sound and balanced budget.

Spending cuts - or more properly stated as expenditure reviews - are part of an ongoing process by the town's administrative managers and SAO. They are already tasked with scrutinizing internal and administrative aspects of the town's expenses and this should include an evaluation of program and service delivery models. Is the town delivering programs and services in the most economical and efficient way? If changes are needed, initiate the process to make program delivery more efficient. This may include negotiations with affected parties such as user groups, contractors and employees.

Another area for consideration is reviewing the town's revenue streams and agreements. This includes ensuring the town is receiving appropriate compensation for services provided. For example, funding under gas tax agreements and other sources of community funding. Other creative and new sources of generating revenues and accessing third party grants, contributions and investment opportunities must also be fully explored.

6) If a property tax exempt home owner runs a home based business, should they lose their property tax exemption? Why?

This question involves the interaction of two town by-laws and one territorial program. The by-laws deal with two very distinct issues. By-law #504 is business licensing, while by-law #439 deals with property taxes for senior citizens and disabled persons. Both by-laws have been discussed by numerous councils since their enactments over 25 years ago. They will most likely be a topic of discussion for the new council and any changes must be subjected to proper community consultations and a vigorous impact assessment analysis.

The territorial program involves the Senior Tax Relief program. Any change or repeal of by-law #439 may impact the beneficiaries of the program as well as the Town's reimbursement from the GNWT.

A popular misconception involving by-law #439 is that the Town does not collect property taxes from senior citizens. The reality is, eligible senior citizens are entitled to a 50% exemption under the by-law provision and up to an additional 50% tax relief relating to the GNWT program, which is administered by the Town. The GNWT reimburses the Town for that portion of the senior tax relief. The commonly overlooked beneficiaries of this program are people with disabilities.

Separator Page

Introduction

Hello, my name is Kevin Campbell and I am running for Town Councillor. I own my own Plumbing Business here in Fort Smith, KC Plumbing and Heating.

I also am a Board Member of the Fort Smith Regional Wellness Council and I am currently the President of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #239.

I would like to have the opportunity to become a Town Councillor in order to be a voice for the concerns of the residents of Fort Smith.

1. What is the one thing you would like to accomplish during your term?

I would like ensure that we have programs in place for ongoing maintenance of our Town Facilities which would include preventive maintenance. We also need to address the safety/crime issue that is happening in Fort Smith at this time.

2. What does leadership mean to you? What are your leadership qualities? Define your style of leadership.

Leadership means to me someone who can motivate and inspire people to achieve their goals. My leadership qualities I believe are that I am honest and willing to listen and work with people. My style of leadership is working together and as a team player.

3. How is it possible for property owners to accumulate such large tax arrears? What will be your strategy for collection to prevent this from happening in the future?

Good question, and one that I myself wondered how property owners were able to accumulate such large tax arrears. This is definitely something on my radar and I would be looking into how the Town would be able to collect on these arrears even if that means that the property is put up for public auction.

4. In your opinion, what are the Town's immediate and long term infrastructure needs?

Our immediate infrastructure needs would be the water and sewer issue which is in progress. Our long term needs would be maintaining our roads and town buildings on an ongoing bases.

5. Are you willing to cut spending to keep taxes from increasing? What cuts to services would you make?

If I am elected this would be something that would require further investigation and I would need to have a better understanding of the spending practices within the Town. I would be in willing to cut spending in order to keep taxes from increasing although I would want to have the public made aware of what cuts are being considered prior to actually doing the cuts.

6. If a property tax exempt home owner runs a home based business, should they lose their property tax exemption? Why?

This may have to be looked at on a case by case bases. If the home business is generating a large amount of income then I would say they should lose their property tax exemption.

Separator Page

Fort Smith Election Candidate's Questions

- 1. What is the one thing you would like to accomplish during your term?** I would like to see the College Headquarters remain in Fort Smith, and if the university programing comes to the north that the Fort Smith campus be the location of such programing. We have the infrastructure, and we have the economy which would make the University more feasible.
- 2. What does leadership mean to you? What are your leadership qualities? Define your style of leadership?** To me, leadership means having the skills required to lead the people. I believe that I would never expect a worker to do something that I cannot do. I am a firm believer that a good leader is a good team player, and if possible, staff should be encouraged to work with management to make the projects successful.
- 3. How is it possible for property owners to accumulate such large tax arrears? What will be your strategy for collection to prevent this from happening in the future?** In the past, there hasn't been enough effort on the part of administration to collect taxes payable. Penalties must be enforced for non-payment of taxes. If taxes aren't made in full when due, a payment program must be set up to ensure orderly payment of the taxes so that the amounts don't get too high. If all efforts have been exhausted, then the town Must take over ownership and sell the property. Giving too much time for taxes to be paid only puts the property owner in greater debt. Enforcement will get property owners to pay their taxes on time.
- 4. In your opinion, what are the town's immediate and long term infrastructure needs?** Town hall is in need of being replaced, as

well as the library. Administration has a capital plan which identifies what infrastructure needs to be upgraded, and budgeting is in place to ensure that this is done when the need arises.

5. Are you willing to cut spending to keep taxes from increasing?

What cuts to services would you make? Fort Smith is a tax based community, and as such, taxes are required for the town projects to be completed. In order to protect against major tax expenses during times when large expenses have to be covered, if cuts must be made, we have to ensure that the most needed services are protected, and that the services which we can cut down on may be decreased, however, we still need to keep what ever services we can. What usually suffers the most is non essential services. When cuts come to these areas, we must make sure that we still protect what we can.

6. If a property tax exempt home owner runs a home based business, should they lose their tax exemption? Why? I don't believe that we should immediately go to the tax exempt owners to collect from them. These people are seniors or handicapped owners, and as such, they are living on pensions. The small amount of money they bring in from their small businesses is not usually enough to cover the tax which they are saving. These people are usually here because of the small concessions which they have, and they still spend money on utilities etc. if this small exemption was taken away, a lot of the people would move away, and the town would lose out in the long run.

Submitted by: Al Dumont, candidate for Town Council

Separator Page

Louise N B Beaulieu

Box 804- xoe opo

Fort Smith NWT

PH#; 1 867 872 2239 (H)

All Candidates forum.....Questions and Answers

1) What is the one thing you would like to accomplish during your term.

A)-I would like to remove the word ACCOMPLISH from the question and replace it with DO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, WITH WHAT IS AVAILABLE, and that is focus on our community, the vandalism and be able to open more options to our youth and young adults,through the resources that we have at hand.

2) What does leadership mean to you. What are your leadership qualities. Define your style of leadership.

A)- Leadership to me, is to be a person, that has an open mind and good listening skill's, along with a shoulder people can lean on, and leadership also mean's being an advocate for the people you lead, by keeping an open communication and knowledge field for people to be aware of if needed for the community.

A)my leadership qualities are, I'm a people person, I like being out in the community and meeting and communicating with the general public. I'm also a listener and at time's do give options of advise to people. I have also been an advocate for people, when needed in the community.

I do have leadership skill's through my work field as a,

Teamleader/Crewboss/Fireboss----with ENR and Sergeant/teamleader----Canadian Ranger Patrol and Teamleader/organizer---Citizen on patrol and Teamleader/organizer---Pheonix schooling---(with Mayor Martselios)

A) My leadership style is, being open with people and to make people aware of where and who I am and be able to communicate with all people, never put and judgement on anyone or anything and being a good listener also helps.

3) how is possible for property owners to accumulate such large tax arrears. What will your strategy for collections to prevent this from happening in the future.

A) Im not sure of which property owners the question is for....before I give my answer....is it...Corp. business....non profit...private business....GNWT...Local...

A) I first need to know the type of property owners we're discussing in this question.

4) In your opinion, what are the towns immediate and long term infrastructure needs.

A) To find and give more opportunities to our community for our youth and young adults in the form of schooling and summer jobs and education that is suited to for our community that would fit our troubled youth and young people

A) Better/more options made available to our homeless and troubled people with our resources we have at hand...Social services...wellness...victim services...shelters....housing.

5) Are you willing to cut spending to keep taxes from increasing. What cuts to services would you make.

A) It would depend on what services are being of spending to benefit the taxes from increasing

A)That would depend on what services and their operational purposes before one can say they are making cuts to the services

6) If a property tax exempt home owner runs a home based business should they lose their property tax exemption

A) It would depend on the type of business and if it exceeds the amount allowed for small business in the home within town boundaries.

Introduction,

Louise Beaulieu

DOB Oct 1958

Fort Smith NWT

I was born and raised in Fort Smith and lived here all my life, except for three yrs to finish my schooling.

I am a descendent of Francious King Beaulieu The First , making me a Metis

Separator Page

Candidate Forum Questionnaire Responses

What is the one thing you would like to accomplish during your term?

My goal as councilor is to work hard and do my homework, ensure the public is being engaged and make sure I give full consideration and thought to every decision. There are very few things that you complete as a councilor that you should take singular credit for accomplishing. Everything requires collaboration and the support of your fellow councilors and the Town of Fort Smith staff. As well as the buy-in and support of the public. Sometimes even with all those things, you may not accomplish your goal because outside factors prevent it from happening within the expected period, or at all. My first term as a councilor I wanted more sidewalks. Over five years, multiple tenders were awarded, and project extensions were granted, and yet only a fraction of the intended sidewalks were completed before the planned sidewalk expansions were simply canceled. My 2nd term as councilor I strived to set more realistic and attainable goals and made the development and implementation of comprehensive waste management and reduction the cornerstone of my election platform. My 2nd term came to an end, and even with the full support of Council and the Town of Fort Smith. Only the request for proposal for the development of a waste management plan had been completed. But there had been multiple public consultations, surveys and a lot of advanced work completed by public advisory boards. Another two years past and a comprehensive waste management plan had been completed and adopted by council, but implementation arguably the most complicated and expensive component remains incomplete. I want to return to council to try and see the implementation of a comprehensive waste management plan through to completion. Because I have learned that even though I may not have completed exactly what I set out to in my earlier terms as councilor, I do not consider my time or efforts to have been in vain or to have been a failure. I know that a good councilor isn't measured by a singular goal or accomplishment and that often things can be more complicated than they initially seem.

What does leadership mean to you? What are your leadership qualities? Define your style of leadership.

To me, leadership means inspiring and empowering those around you with your actions, your commitment, and your beliefs. It means helping others to be great, advancing your goals as a team and ensuring they receive recognition before you do. It means seeking the advice of those with more experience when needed, and never thinking you know better than all. Leadership means carrying the heavy load without being asked, and not shying away from making hard decisions when you need to.

I try to meet my own expectations for what I consider good leadership, and in doing so try to display the qualities and leadership style that I have idealized. I believe that no one chooses themselves to be a leader, true leaders are chosen by others. There is a distinct difference from being in a position of power or authority and being a true leader.

Candidate Forum Questionnaire Responses

How is it possible for property owners to accumulate such large tax arrears? What will be your strategy for collection to prevent this from happening in the future?

Though an unfortunate reality, it is possible for many reasons. Every corporation has to manage bad debts and seek to minimize outstanding accounts receivable. In some cases there is a large amount of tax arrears on a property that has poorly defined ownership or requires cooperation between multiple levels of government to settle the arrears. Or it is because sometimes there is a limited number of tools in the shed to use to collect arrears. The process of taking away land with tax arrears and selling it at auction is a complex and lengthy one with legislation (The Property Assessment and Taxation Act) governing what one can and cannot do. The process is time-consuming, with approximately two years required to ensure the process is handled correctly, with additional legal costs building up throughout the process that will be added to the arrears. Even with the threat of losing ones home, some will not, or cannot make the arrangements to pay outstanding taxes. There are even high-interest rates in place that are meant to discourage late or nonpayment of taxes. But that is not still compelling enough in all cases, and those high-interest rates can rapidly inflate the amount owing in arrears and make it harder to collect. Leaving an ever higher amount owing month over month with no advancement of payment.

To prevent this, we need to catch up on arrears and hold a new tax sale. Settle or write off some old debts that will likely never be collected. Then ensure Town of Fort Smith staff has the financial and human resources necessary to stay on top of the current tax arrears. As it is, I believe the Town of Fort Smith staff are already working to organize a tax sale.

In your opinion, what are the Town's immediate and long-term infrastructure needs?

The Water and Sewer infrastructure upgrades and replacements throughout downtown are still pending. This would require major disruptions to traffic and businesses operating in the area and then paving to properly complete the project. This would be a complicated endeavor and would be a major accomplishment on the town's behalf given the advanced age of our underground infrastructure throughout town. The recreation and community center has varying mid-life upgrades and retrofits pending. Many capital projects were canceled or postponed indefinitely due to the arena fire several years ago. There was a lot of work and public consultations that went into creating capital project lists and infrastructure improvement plans that I would like to see these revived and revisited.

The most immediate and long-term need for infrastructure facing Town of Fort Smith is the revenue required to effectively reduce the infrastructure deficit in our community. Our infrastructure is aging faster than we can effectively save to maintain or replace it, while also advancing new infrastructure projects. The department of municipal and community affairs has acknowledged that they are under funding small community infrastructure and The Town of Fort Smith has put a lot of work into long-term capital planning and needs assessment. Finding a way forward should be a priority of the next council.

Candidate Forum Questionnaire Responses

Are you willing to cut spending to keep taxes from increasing? What cuts to services would you make?

This is a question that cannot be answered in a vacuum. Municipalities are not allowed to budget a deficit, and at budget time the only “real” way to balance a budget is to increase revenue (taxes and fees) or cut costs (existing services). You can talk about finding new funding opportunities and hope for new program delivery revenue in the upcoming year, but in the end, until the revenue is received, it is hard to budget it.

In the 2018 budget, the Town of Fort Smith had approximately \$8,700,000 of expected revenue, of that \$8,700,000 approximately \$2,000,000 is revenue from taxation. Meaning approximately 23% of revenue is directly sourced from taxation. Of that \$2,000,000 approximately \$1,500,000 (17%) is residential taxes and \$500,000 (5.7%) is non-residential (commercial, industrial and institutional). Another \$1,200,000 (14%) of revenue is acquired via Grants in Lieu of Taxes which are affected by tax rates so could be considered revenue equal or similar to taxation. The Grants in lieu of taxes share of overall revenue it is broken up approximately as follows \$200,000 (2.3%) Federal Government, \$830,000 (9.5%) GNWT, \$100,000 (1%) Salt River First Nation. Other revenue based on fees set by council, the sales of services and program deliveries amount to approximately \$720,000 (8%) of total revenue. That makes the estimated total amount of revenue that council can influence at approximately \$3,900,000 or about 45% of total revenue. The remaining major revenue sources are grants from the GNWT Department of municipal and community affairs O&M funding \$1,900,000 (22%) and conditional grants from federal and GNWT funding programs \$2,900,000 (33%).

This information is relevant in trying to convey where revenue comes from and understand what revenue council can influence in the overall picture, as well as what share of revenue taxation represents. I do not believe the taxpayers of Fort Smith are a bottomless source of tax revenue. In fact, if the recent budget is compared to the budget data from 2009, it shows a troubling trend in that our revenue from residential taxation is almost identical nearly ten years later, even though taxes have increased year over year. To me, this indicates that a smaller number of people are paying an ever-increasing amount of taxes just to maintain historical revenue from taxation. Which is not sustainable as it means that if the trend continues unabated that ever-increasing mill rate hikes will be required but that the burden will continue to be disproportionately carried by a smaller number of rate payers. With the actual revenue gained from these larger mill rate increases still only representing a very small increase in revenue as a whole.

All of that simply raises the point; if revenue from taxation has been reasonably flat even with the increased taxation. How has the Town of Fort Smith managed to deliver balanced budgets, infrastructure improvements, capital investments, employee wage increases, and expanded recreational programs? The answer is that the Town of Fort Smith Staff, and the Council that Governs the Town of Fort Smith have worked hard to balance the budget and adjusts programs and services in a manner that is reasonable and respectful to citizens, taxpayers and the employees of the Town of Fort Smith. I would encourage the Town of Fort Smith to continue that practice.

Candidate Forum Questionnaire Responses

There should not be any cuts that are easy to make when balancing a budget. If reductions to services are required, then the decision would be based on input from Town staff, data, and statistics on usage and thorough discussion by council. Even then cuts to services should be managed by the adjustment or reduction of deliveries and not the elimination of any specific service or position. I don't support increased taxation to maintain unsustainable practices. However, I support fair taxation that attempts to keep up with inflation and not inflict the pain of trying to manage hundreds of small budget cuts to try and fund forced growth year after year.

If a property tax exempt homeowner runs a home-based business, should they lose their property tax exemption? Why?

A policy that would seek to exclusively revoke the property tax exemptions of seniors and the disabled because they chose to operate a home business is not something I would support. Simply revoking someone's property tax exemption due to them operating a home business lacks a rational sense of scope or scale. If the question is, do I think it's fair for someone to run a medium to large size operation out of their home, while avoiding paying commercial or even residential taxes, then my answer is no. However, in my experience, many of the issues or concerns raised about the operation of home occupation businesses are normally a matter of perception, or bylaw & regulatory enforcement. Unfairness is often cited, and in many cases is a very real and understandable concern. This has been discussed for many years and by many administrations. The only way I see the Town of Fort Smith being able to correct many of the issues of fairness raised against home occupation businesses would be to create reporting requirements and set some form of tiered or progressive structure for evaluating the size of ones home operation. I struggle to reconcile if I support invasive reporting and a more complicated approval process, or if it is what is required to ensure fairness for our business operators who have invested in commercial development.

I see home occupation businesses in two different veins. One is a business startup and incubator system that allows residents the flexibility to start and grow a small home business to a capacity where they are ready to move into a commercial property, hire staff and grow larger. And another is a small business registration system that allows small operators, consultants, non-profits and skilled services to have a licensed, registered home business that is above board, but may never grow large or produce enough revenue to expand, higher staff or move into a commercial space.

In the end what is needed is fairness, regardless of taxation levels. We need bylaws, taxation, and zoning that is fair, attractive and sustainable. We want to encourage growth and development, but support our existing residents and business operators. We need to have an open and honest dialog with everyone about the roadblocks and issues we face and what may be needed to improve them.

Separator Page

- Status: Running for Councillor, Fort Smith – Chris DeWolf
- Age: 57
- Marital Status: Single
- Time in Area: 20+ years
- Experience: As a small business owner, community volunteer and former town employee, I have a vast and varied skill set and experiences to draw from that will bring a unique perspective to the role of councillor. I was a member and the programming coordinator for The Artists of the South Slave Society (TASSS), helped the Northern Life Museum & Cultural Centre's program coordinator and organizer of Summer Splash - arts awareness, professional development and fun week of art classes, workshops and artist market. While both the TASSS and Summer Splash experiences were art focused, they were successful events that required organizational skills, time management skills, and ability to coordinate and manage a multitude of dynamic aspects including artists, participants, logistics, venues, and scheduling, advertising and funding sources. As a former employee of the Town of Fort Smith, I understand the duties and processes of town administration.
- Why Running: I am running because I want to contribute to the community in a meaningful way rather than be one of those people who criticise while sitting comfortably at home. I would like to see some positive changes take place in several different areas including Town's leadership approach, addressing the lack of communication from our leadership to citizens, addressing the lack of opportunity for dialogue with residents, I would like to see a comprehensive economic development strategy implemented and that includes the Shop Local Policy being adhered to. The town needs to lead by example and utilize services and businesses with each and every opportunity it has to shop local.
- What differentiates you from other candidates: I am a citizen, not a politician. I will be a citizen for action, not political speak. I take pride in my community and want Fort Smith to return to its days of vibrancy and strength, when there was a true sense of belonging and cooperation amongst all groups and residents.
- Top election issue: There are a few concerns for Fort Smith currently. The youth crime that has been taking place for the past two years is a big one. The lack of leadership has lead to the potential loss of jobs, and the removing of Aurora College Head Quarters. The leadership needs to strengthen its relationships with all levels of government and refrain from working in its self-contained silo.
- What does a healthy community look like to you? A healthy community is one in which all residents feel valued and connected. A community is one that residents can be proud of. A healthy community is vibrant, diverse and dynamic, one that other communities model themselves after. A healthy community has a flourishing business sector and facilities are used to their full potential.

1. What is the one thing you would like to accomplish during your term?

The one thing I would like to accomplish is establishing policies and protocols for communications with residents and other levels of government, and other community leaders.

I would like to see the revitalization of Conibear Park. It is in the heart of town and has always been a wonderful gathering space for local events and is not in the slide zone.

A slide zone evaluation needs to be done and steps to ensure the safety of residents.

2. What does leadership mean to you? What are your leadership qualities? Define your style of leadership.

Leadership means to have a vision, to have achievable goals to meet that vision and the need to have a plan as to make that happen and to have engagement with residents. My leadership qualities are that I am forthright, disciplined, not afraid to speak out, not a follower, honest, open and transparent, open minded and cooperative. My style of leadership is knowing what needs to be accomplished and finding a way to make it happen. I am the type of leader who will jump in and work alongside colleagues, rather than dictate to others how to do the work. I am not a micro-manager.

3. How is it possible for property owners to accumulate such large tax arrears? What will be your strategy for collection to prevent this from happening in the future?

Because I have always paid my property taxes on time, I don't know enough about this issue to know what the bylaws and policies are. Now that I have heard about the tax arrears list, I will look into it further. I am very interested in this issue as a tax payer and a candidate.

4. In your opinion, what are the Town's immediate and long term infrastructure needs?

Town Hall and Library need to be renovated for all residents to be allowed access. For example there is no handicapped access to the council chambers or to the library basement. Crumbling water and sewer systems are causing some residents hardship and need to be addressed immediately before the problems get worse. Long term would be the Rec Centre's ventilation system.

5. Are you willing to cut spending to keep taxes from increasing? What cuts to services would you make

I honestly don't know. I would have to review the budgets to see where cuts could be made. Off the top of my head, I don't think we need garbage collection twice a week. I think that is a luxury for a town of Fort Smith's size.

6. If a property tax exempt home owner runs a home based business, should they lose their property tax exemption?

Tax exemption for home based business owners shouldn't be lost if they earn under X amount of dollars (I'm not sure what that amount would be) I do know that some of our seniors provide essential services such as driver's ed. training, first aid and don't feel this part time revenue should have them losing their exemption.