

Dale Leo Bendfeld responses

Candidate for Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Council Ward 1

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? Municipalities as employers.

I do not support the privatization of any government services, as they eventually turn into For Profit resulting in a decrease or diminishment in the service provided. Second, by going to the private sector we see the positions turned into part-time or minimum wage positions, resulting in families not having a livable wage and a decrease in the service.

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, I am a believer in that to have a strong community you need people to have secure jobs with a livable wage to enjoy and raise their families. I have spent 37 years in uniformed service across this great country and around the world to ensure people have the right to express their thoughts and concerns in a safe and peaceful method. I have always supported the everyone's right to collective agreements and expression of frustration or concerns they have as long as there is no threat to the general public's peace and safety.

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?

Same as above.

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?

Because we have been a "Have Municipality", we have seen numerous provincial and federal programs downloaded to the RMWB. Now, because previously, we had the financial means and wanted to ensure our citizens were supported we handled them. But with the Provincial Governments Bill 21 we have seen a change in our tax base from 18:1 downward to 5:1 resulting in the RMWB needing to make some tough choices and the responsibility to therefore hold the Provincial and Federal Governments to task for those programs and services they are responsible to handle

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?

I believe in a person's right to decide what goes into their body and what they chose not to do for public health safety. That said the person's decision may have ramifications that may affect if they are able to work with the public or in public spaces as their personal decision may affect other people's health, therefore the person's decision may result in them not being able to work with the public during a health crisis. Second, if a personal decision is made, they must be aware that their decisions will have to be considered in the bigger context with the effect on the Public Health Care System and the additional results it may potentially add to the stretched system and what that effect is when their friend and family may need to access it.

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

I support that we have a "user pay" system for specific municipal services. If someone wants to access that program or service, they should be paying. This prevents abuse of the program and service and ensures those that can afford it support it financially. The Municipality has some programs in place to supplement those individuals that don't have the means. I was perplexed to see this past Municipal Council financially support the build and expansion of a golf course, that the general public does not use because of the cost, but deny the Westwood YMCA their required financial support, which daily supported families , new Canadians and financial challenged people.

The RMWB has some of the lowest user fees for transit in the province and at its present level it doesn't even cover the cost of the collection and sorting of the fares. We did learn that during the COVID restriction, when no fares were collected, that it still functioned. Therefore I support no fares on our transit as it was not abused, connected everyone in our spread out municipality and reduces traffic and Green House Gas.