



Questions to City Council and Mayoral Candidates from the Lethbridge Police Association

Dear city council or mayoral candidate,

The Lethbridge Police Association represents the sworn rank and file men and women of the Lethbridge Police Service. In an effort to better inform our members for the upcoming municipal election we seek your responses to questions of importance to our membership. The answers may be shared with our members, and we thank you for your considered responses to the following:

1. In last fall's budget deliberations, City Council passed a motion to remove \$1m from the police service's budget. This came from the operating portion of the budget (minus wages and benefits). As a newly elected city council member will you be in favor of a second reduction to the police service budget for 2022?

No. I support providing the Lethbridge Police Commission and our police services with the resources necessary to deliver the services we are asking you to provide. I am also committed to holding the Police Commission accountable for their oversight of Lethbridge Police Service and its budget. Supporting policing in our community is core to my platform (www.jenschmidtrempe.ca). We need to invest in services that need investing in.

2. According to Statistics Canada the police officer to population ratio across the country is 202 for every 100k population. Lethbridge currently sits at 172, or 15% below the national average and our civilian member population is even lower. Lethbridge is also highest on the crime severity index and ranks 7th in violent crime. As a city council member are you in favor of a more balanced approach to personnel allocation and development for the Lethbridge Police Service that would see more personnel available to respond to calls for service, which includes civilian and specialized positions?

Absolutely. Again, I support providing the Lethbridge Police Commission and our police services with the resources necessary to deliver the services we are asking you to provide. We need to invest in services that need investing in.

We need to look at community safety holistically and recognize that some calls for service are responses to social, not criminal, matters. I will support the Commission in exploring alternatives to those social calls for service and allow them to allocate police resources to true policing matters.

I also want us to ensure that our police officers are getting any mental health supports they need. Policing is not an easy job.

3. How will you support additional strategies that reinforce the police service's ability to deal with crime and disorder issues in our city?

I would encourage residents and businesses to be working with Lethbridge Police Services regarding programs such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), to learn more about what we as residents can do to prevent crime. We, as residents, need to understand that we bear some responsibility in crime prevention.

I would also support communication and education strategies that bring the public, Lethbridge Police Association membership, and Police Commission together towards the common goals for our community, which is ensuring the safety of our community.

4. How do you intend to show your support for our public safety providers as a city council member?

When I owned Lethbridge living magazine, we ran several stories on Lethbridge Police Services including stories on the Citizen's Police Academy, the K-9 Unit, and one of our freelancers wrote about the work police officers did when she participated in a ride along. I believe in the value of support and positive communication around the work our police do.

I would look at ways I could continue to communicate that level of support – sharing on social media the positive impact our police services have on our community, and the work you are doing in the community. I would be interested in participating in a ride along, and I would like to see the re-instatement of the Citizen's Police Academy as a positive educational tool for our community.

I would also like to see a Police Commission built around a skills matrix with input from members of police services, as well as training for new Commission members. Other boards in our community do this, we need to ensure we're doing it with our Police Commission as well. Further to that, I would support regular meetings with members of City Council, the Police Commission, and members of the Lethbridge Police Association so Council can learn directly from officers about challenges going on in our community. I firmly believe in opening lines of communication.

Sincerely,



Jay McMillan, President
Lethbridge Police Association