

2026 Municipal Elections Candidate Questionnaire Responses to NDCC Survey

Organized by area and position

Candidates are grouped by municipality/area, then by position. Each candidate begins on a new page for easier printing. Candidate names and contact details are included where matched in the candidate directory; original questionnaire responses are retained.

Total candidate records: 56

Fort Erie

Councillor — Ward 3

Andrew HOLDSWORTH

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data centres are a thorn in the side of many municipalities lately and a hot topic..I think that as we all use AI for our personal use we need to understand the infrastructure needs to exist somewhere. Cheap low end data centres use resources like they are unlimited. However there are other more efficient options that use less resources, if data centres do have to come to Niagara there are more expensive options (for the developer) to make them less demanding on our hydro, water and other resources. I am not pro data centres but I think if they have to exist we should ensure those developing them make them as efficient as possible.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I think we should keep as many public services within local government as possible, creating and maintaining good jobs in Niagara rather than sourcing them to lowest bidder from potentially elsewhere

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Ensuring an even playing field for all municipal services and employees seems like the only way we should move forward. Hiring based on merit and qualifications.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

I believe that by strengthening public services we strengthen our communities. Public service jobs are the core of our community and essential services should be respected and promoted to our next generation. By keeping these careers in the public sector we create opportunities for the next generation

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

As a former frontline worker (waste water operator) I would invite and welcome input from our frontline workers to ensure they are respected, heard and appreciated.

Fort Erie

Councillor — Ward 3

S Jennifer PRIESTLEY

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I have researched this issue and while I believe more information is needed, at this stage I am not in favour.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I do not agree as there needs to be accountability, structure and direction

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Equity, accessibility, reconciliation and inclusion should be reflected in how every municipal service is designed and delivered. As an openly gay woman, I understand personally how important it is for people to feel respected, welcomed and included in their community. No resident should feel that their background, identity, age, ability, income or personal circumstances create a barrier to accessing municipal services or participating in community life. As a councillor, I would support reviewing municipal policies, facilities, programs and communications through an accessibility and inclusion lens. That means making services physically accessible, ensuring information is clear and available in different formats, and identifying barriers that may prevent seniors, people with disabilities, newcomers, low-income residents and members of marginalized communities from fully participating. Reconciliation must also be more than words. I would support respectful and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, listening to their perspectives and looking for appropriate opportunities to incorporate education, recognition and partnership into municipal initiatives. I also believe inclusion begins with listening. Municipal government should create opportunities for residents from different backgrounds and experiences to have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect them. My approach would be simple: treat every person with dignity, remove unnecessary barriers, listen respectfully and ensure municipal services are delivered fairly and compassionately. A strong community is one where people do not simply feel tolerated — they feel welcomed, respected and valued.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public services are the foundation of a strong, safe and healthy community. Municipal government has a responsibility to protect those services, ensure they remain accessible and reliable, and make sure taxpayers receive good value for the money they contribute. If elected, my first priority would be protecting the essential services residents depend upon every day — safe roads, water and wastewater infrastructure, fire and emergency services, parks and recreation, libraries and community facilities. As Fort Erie continues to grow, our infrastructure and services must grow responsibly with it. Health care would also remain a priority for me. Although many health and social services fall under Regional or Provincial responsibility, municipal leaders have an important advocacy role. I would continue to push for accessible local health care, support for seniors, physician recruitment and services that allow residents to receive the care they need close to home. I would also advocate for affordable and attainable housing, improved services for seniors, accessible recreation and public spaces, and programs that contribute to the well-being of children and families. At the same time, strengthening public services does not simply mean spending more. Council has a responsibility to examine how tax dollars are being used, eliminate unnecessary duplication, pursue Provincial and Federal funding, build partnerships and ensure investments are producing measurable benefits for residents. I believe strongly in listening to the people who use our services and the employees and community organizations who deliver them. Decisions about reducing, changing or expanding important services should be based on evidence, community need and meaningful public consultation. Fort Erie is growing, and we need to plan for that growth rather than continually reacting to it. My priority would be to protect the services residents rely upon today while investing responsibly in the infrastructure, health care, housing and community services we will need tomorrow. Ultimately, municipal government exists to serve its residents. I would work to ensure that our public services

remain reliable, accessible and financially sustainable so that Fort Erie continues to be a community where people of all ages can live, work, raise their families and retire with confidence

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Communication, mediation and listening to the the every day issues.

Grimsby

Councillor — Ward 2

Ben Purkiss

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I think this question should be more focused on how people want to use AI in their daily life and what impact that will have. We want the tools, but not the resources it needs in our backyards. I believe that data centres need to be strategically placed, or we as citizens need to drastically reduce our use of AI in our daily life.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

There are very few instances where contracting out public services would be necessary. I would not support this under normal circumstances unless there was a shortage of workers in an emergency services field.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe in the right candidate for the right job - not hiring candidates to fill a 'quota'. However, all jobs should have equal opportunities for every applicant, where applicable. We should continue to promote local jobs to our students and businesses, and look to increase our local workforce.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal governments need to have a solid working relationship with the province to ensure our local needs are met in our public services. As a councilor, we need to work with our local union representatives to ensure their needs are heard and listened to and championed for. My priority would be to meet with local public services representatives to hear the issues they are facing.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I would encourage CUPE members to reach out to me directly so I can better understand their current issues that municipal government plays a role in. As a member of council, we are here to ensure our businesses and residents' voices are heard and issues are hit head on.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

My faith teaches me that every person is created with dignity and deserves to be treated with compassion, respect, and care. I would bring that belief to my work as a trustee by listening to families, removing barriers, and making sure every student feels welcomed, valued, and supported. I believe inclusion starts with seeing the person in front of us, understanding their needs, and ensuring they have the opportunity to thrive. I would also support meaningful reconciliation by helping students understand Indigenous history and perspectives and encouraging respectful relationships within our communities. For me, this is about putting faith into action—serving others, caring for those who may need extra support, and ensuring every child knows they belong.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

I believe strong schools are the foundation of strong communities. School boards must protect public education, use resources wisely, and ensure students have safe, welcoming, high-quality schools. If elected, I would put students first, support teachers and staff, maintain school facilities, manage public funds responsibly, and listen to families and the community. As a person of faith, I would serve with compassion, common sense, accountability, and a commitment to helping every child succeed.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

I want every child, all staff and families to feel safe, valued, and that they belong. Guided by my faith, I believe every student deserves dignity, respect, and compassion. I would prioritize safe schools, strong anti-bullying measures, support for student well-being, and open communication with families.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

I would advocate for greater investment in classroom resources, special education, student mental-health supports, and school maintenance. I would also push for less administrative burden on educators, stronger parent engagement, and policies that give school boards greater flexibility to respond to local needs. Above all, funding and decisions should keep students and their success at the centre.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

The board should ensure students have timely access to mental-health supports and that teachers have the resources to recognize when a student needs help. Guided by my Catholic faith, I believe every child has dignity and should know they are valued, supported, and never alone. I would encourage strong partnerships with families, community services, and our Catholic faith community to support the whole child—mind, body, and spirit.

Grimsby

Councillor — Ward 4

Nick DiFlavio

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I am currently opposed to data centres locating in Grimsby. These facilities can require significant amounts of electricity and water, as well as substantial infrastructure, and I do not believe existing residents and taxpayers should bear the cost of accommodating them. Before considering a data centre, I would want clear information about its electricity and water consumption, impact on the local environment, noise, heat, land use, emissions and infrastructure requirements. Any additional municipal infrastructure required should be fully paid for by the proponent, with no additional cost to taxpayers or ratepayers. I also want to see evidence from communities where data centres have been established about their actual economic benefits and the costs and impacts they have experienced. Until we have a much better understanding of the full picture, I do not believe Grimsby should be pursuing data centre development.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

As a union member in my day job, I strongly support unions and public workers. I believe essential public services and public assets should remain publicly owned and accountable. I am not opposed to contracting out a particular service where there is a clear benefit to taxpayers, but it should never be assumed that contracting out is automatically more efficient or less expensive. Any proposal should have a clear business case comparing the costs, service levels, accountability, risks and long-term implications of delivering the service in-house versus through a contractor. Council also needs to consider the knowledge and experience of our existing workforce. For essential services, I would be particularly cautious about arrangements that reduce public control or accountability. The priority should always be reliable service, value for taxpayers and protecting the long-term public interest.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

As a special education teacher during the day, this question is important to me. Municipal services should be accessible to everyone, and that starts with understanding the barriers that different residents experience. I would continue to support accessible facilities, communications and services, while looking for practical ways to make it easier for residents to participate in municipal life. We also need to listen to the people who use these services. Meaningful consultation with residents, accessibility groups, Indigenous communities and other community organizations can help identify barriers that may not be obvious from a Council table. For me, inclusion is about making sure people have a genuine opportunity to participate, access services and have their concerns heard. It should be part of how we plan and deliver services, not simply something considered after decisions have already been made.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal governments have a responsibility to provide reliable public services that residents can count on, while ensuring those services are financially sustainable. Council's role is to protect the services that are essential to a healthy community and make responsible long-term decisions about the infrastructure and people needed to deliver them. My priorities would include maintaining and replacing infrastructure before problems become emergencies, protecting water and wastewater services as public assets, maintaining roads and public spaces, and supporting recreation and community programs that contribute to quality of life. I also believe we need to plan realistically, use available provincial and federal funding, and make sure taxpayers receive good value for the services they fund. Strengthening public services requires both investment and responsible financial management.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I respect our staff and they are the first place I go when I need information. Frontline workers have practical knowledge that Council needs to hear when making decisions about the services they deliver. I believe workers should be treated with respect and consulted when decisions will significantly affect their workplaces, responsibilities or ability to provide services. That consultation should happen early enough to be meaningful, rather than after a decision has effectively been made. I would also expect management and Council to consider the operational experience of frontline staff when evaluating changes to programs, services or how work is delivered. Ultimately, Council is responsible for setting policy and managing public resources, while staff bring the expertise needed to implement those decisions. Respecting both roles, maintaining open communication and listening to the people doing the work are important to delivering reliable public services.

Lincoln

Mayor

Cheryl Keddy-Scott

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I do not support data centres that place excessive demands on our water supply, energy grid, or environment. These facilities can consume significant amounts of water and electricity, while offering limited long-term employment for the community. Any proposal must be fully transparent and undergo rigorous environmental review

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I do not support contracting out or privatizing essential public services. Services such as water, wastewater, waste management and public infrastructure must remain publicly accountable, reliable and focused on residents, not profit.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I would promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation and inclusion by ensuring every resident and student has a fair opportunity to participate, succeed and be heard. This means removing physical, financial and communication barriers, providing accessible services and facilities, and consulting directly with people whose voices are often overlooked. I would support meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities and ensure reconciliation is reflected in policies, education and decision making. Strong communities are built when everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Decisions must be transparent, inclusive and based on the real needs of the people we serve.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal governments have a responsibility to protect and strengthen the essential public services residents rely on every day. These include safe drinking water, wastewater treatment, roads, emergency services, waste management, public transit, libraries, recreation and community programs. If elected, I would ensure these services remain accessible, reliable and publicly accountable. Municipal employees must be treated with respect and provided with the resources needed to serve residents effectively. Council members and staff must follow a strong code of ethics based on honesty, integrity, professionalism and accountability.

Niagara Falls

Councillor

Brian (Winnie) WINROW

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

i think data centres could be beneficial to niagara falls bringing investment, jobs and economic opportunities. but only after all the data is in on the environmental impact it would have. weighing both sides. the benefits

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I believe contracting out or privatizing public services should be considered very carefully. Priorities must be maintaining reliable accessible and affordable services for residents.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

i believe every resident should have fair and equal access to municipal services regardless of age ,ability or background. I think the city should work closely with schools ,niagara college and brock university to find out there needs. When it comes to reconciliation i believe it starts with respect ,listening and always learning. Inclusion should be something we demonstrate through our actions my years volunteering in Chippawa have taught me that a strong community is one where people look out for one another and everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public services are the backbone of healthy community. I believe municipal governments have a responsibility to make sure those services are reliable,,accessible and that they are there when residents need them. My priorities would be protecting the services people depend on everyday and supporting those who deliver those services.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

i believe in respecting and supporting people who deliver theses services. Having spent 40 years in the trades and 20 years as a volunteer firefighter i understand the importance of having experienced ,dedicated people on the front lines. I would support meaningful communications with CUPE members listening to there concerns about workplace environment, workplace safety. At the same time always protecting public services means being responsible with taxpayers money.

Niagara Falls

Councillor

Fred AUDIBERT

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data centres are no doubt controversial and require careful study and consideration before making firm decisions. I would support a careful review of their water use, energy demand, emissions, noise, and infrastructure needs before any approvals are granted. If data centres threaten the affordability or reliability of water and electricity for residents and essential services, they should not be approved.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I am opposed to contracting out or privatizing public services. The lowest bid is not always the best value when service quality, accountability, local jobs, and long-term costs are considered. Before outsourcing is even contemplated, Council should transparently compare it with in-house delivery and consult the workers who know the service best.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Every resident should be able to access municipal services with dignity and respect. I would support accessible audit of facilities, sidewalks, parks, programs, websites, and public meetings, along with meaningful consultation with residents who face barriers. Reconciliation must also involve respectful relationships and ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal government has a responsibility to protect the services residents rely on every day: safe streets, clean water, reliable infrastructure, parks, emergency response, and responsive City operations. My priority would be to get the basics right, maintain public assets properly, plan ahead, and ensure taxpayers receive value for every dollar spent.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Frontline workers keep our city running, and they deserve respect, safe workplaces, proper staffing, and meaningful consultation. As a retired firefighter, I understand the value of listening to the people who do essential work every day. I would work constructively with CUPE members and their representatives before decisions are made about staffing, service changes, contracting out, or workplace policies.

Niagara Falls

Councillor

Joedy BURDETT

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data centres can bring investment and economic activity, but they can also place significant demands on electricity, water and local infrastructure. I would assess any proposal on its individual merits and require clear information about water use, energy demand, environmental impacts, infrastructure requirements and who ultimately bears those costs. I would support development that is responsible, sustainable and provides a genuine benefit to Niagara Falls, but I would not support shifting disproportionate environmental or infrastructure costs onto residents and taxpayers.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I do not support an ideological approach in either direction. Municipal services should be delivered in the way that provides residents with reliable, accountable and cost-effective service while respecting the people who perform that work. I would not support contracting out simply to reduce wages or working conditions, nor would I make an unconditional commitment that contracting out could never be appropriate. Any proposal should be supported by transparent evidence showing the true costs, service standards, accountability implications and effects on employees before Council makes a decision.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Municipal services should be accessible and respectful to every resident. I would support identifying and removing physical, communication and administrative barriers, consulting directly with people affected by municipal decisions, and ensuring that accessibility is considered when services, facilities and policies are designed rather than added afterward. I also support constructive reconciliation with Indigenous communities and ensuring that municipal decision-making is fair, transparent and inclusive while remaining focused on practical improvements in the services residents receive.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal Council has a direct responsibility for deciding which municipal services are provided, evaluating those services and ensuring accountability and transparency in how they are delivered. My priorities would be dependable core services, responsible infrastructure investment, public safety, roads and transportation, parks and community facilities, and responsible management of municipal finances. Protecting public services also means making sure residents receive good value for the taxes they pay and that Council openly examines whether programs are actually delivering the results they were intended to achieve.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Frontline employees often have practical knowledge that is important when Council considers changes to municipal services. I would support meaningful consultation before major decisions are made, respectful labour relations, safe workplaces and clear communication about changes that affect employees. Consultation should be genuine rather than occurring after decisions have effectively already been made. At the same time, Council has a responsibility to consider employees, residents, service quality and taxpayers together when making decisions about municipal operations.

Niagara Falls

Councillor

Shannon MITCHELL

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion must be part of every school board decision, not occasional initiatives. As a trustee and Chair of the Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Committee, I have worked to ensure that students, families, education workers, and community members have a meaningful voice in our schools. If re-elected, I will continue to support equity data so we can identify and address unequal outcomes in discipline, achievement, access to programs, and well-being. I will advocate for accessible schools and communications, timely accommodations, meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, and stronger supports for Black, Indigenous, racialized, disabled, newcomer, 2SLGBTQIA+, and low-income students. Inclusion must be reflected in budgets and staffing: students need timely access to education assistants, special education supports, youth workers, social workers, and other frontline staff.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public education is an essential public service and a cornerstone of healthy, democratic communities. School boards must protect it from privatization, contracting out, and austerity measures that weaken the services students and families depend upon. My priority is to defend publicly funded and publicly delivered education, respect the rights and expertise of education workers, and advocate for fair wages, safe workplaces, stable employment, and strong collective bargaining. Trustees do not negotiate collective agreements directly, but we do set priorities and budgets. We must make decisions that value workers and advocate for provincial funding that makes smaller, safer, better-supported schools possible.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

Every student and education worker deserves to feel safe, respected, and included at school. Safe schools require adequate staffing, early intervention, accessible spaces, clear anti-hate and anti-discrimination measures, and policies developed in consultation with the people affected by them. I will continue to advocate for more education assistants, child and youth workers, social workers, psychologists, and special education staff; and fewer delays for assessments and supports. I also support safe, affirming schools for 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff, stronger action against racism and bullying, and investments that address overcrowding and aging school buildings. We cannot expect safe schools when staff and students are asked to do more with less.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

Ontario needs a funding formula that reflects the real cost of public education. I will advocate to the Ministry of Education for stable, needs-based funding that at the very least keeps pace with inflation, enrolment growth, staffing requirements, and increasingly complex student needs. This includes stronger and permanent funding for special education, school-based mental health professionals, education assistants, school repairs, new schools, child care, and transportation. I will also advocate for measures that reduce precarious work, strengthen recruitment and retention of education workers, and protect the role of democratically elected school boards. Provincial underfunding should not be downloaded onto students, families, and the workers who support them.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

Student mental health must be treated as a core part of public education, not an optional extra. Students need timely, trauma-informed support, and education workers need the staffing and professional resources to respond safely and effectively. The Board should invest in more social workers, child and youth workers, psychologists, special-education supports, and early-intervention programs. We must create school environments where students experience belonging, safety, connection, and caring relationships with adults. The province must provide sustained funding for this work; short-term grants cannot address long-term mental health needs.

Niagara Falls

Councillor

Terry THOMSON

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I would have to see local studies and reports showing the pros and cons of any type of data centre proposal. I believe some of the pros are new permanent jobs, construction employment, improvements to infrastructure, greater tax revenue and more investment in the local economy. I would have to weigh those positives against the negatives such as the extreme consumption of electricity and water usage and who would pay for the added infrastructure. I would like to know any proposed cooling system and the size of the building. From what I know of these systems, they also cause noise and heat issues. I always support development to bring in new jobs and financial assistance to the city but I would heavily review the studied pros and cons before I would agree to allow one in Niagara Falls

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I believe that all essential services must remain accountable to the taxpayers. I would lean more toward contracted services as compared to privatization of services where our city could not be effective in delivering a service. I would use an example of during a storm where so many trees come down, the City wouldn't have the resources or equipment to successfully address the issue. Another example I would use, large projects where the cost of the equipment needed for the one time project would be a liability on the taxpayer. It may be easier and financially beneficial to contract out that work. Before hiring any additional city staff or buying equipment, Council should determine whether the work can be completed more efficiently through a competitive private contract. Where contracting provides a demonstrated savings or better service, we should use it. If the City can do the work for better value then we keep that in-house.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Every resident of Niagara Falls deserves fair, respectful and accessible services. I would ensure all of the buildings, parks and any other facility provide access to all residents. I also believe we should recognize the history and contributions of the Indigenous people. We should have continued discussions with members of their community.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Council should ensure that all essential services are reliable, affordable and accountable to the taxpayer. My priorities would be to improve infrastructure with both short term and long term maintenance of the roads, bridges, sewers and water. I would also advocate for regular reviews of operations to identify efficiencies. I would also invest into training of our skilled workers to improve their abilities in a growing market of artificial intelligence and technology. I would ensure our public safety units have the required staffing, equipment and resources.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I am a strong believer in open and frequent communication. The people responsible for providing the service should have their voices heard. I would consult with employees before any major operational decision is made. I think there has to be early and open communication and to maintain a respectful relationship with representatives during negotiations. I would pay close attention to items such as overtime so that members aren't experiencing mental and physical burnout. I would ensure staffing levels are appropriate to prevent inefficiencies in services

Niagara Falls

Councillor

Tony CARUSO

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe every student deserves a fair opportunity to succeed and to attend a school where they are treated with dignity, respect and compassion. Equity should mean identifying and removing genuine barriers to education, ensuring appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities, supporting special education, and making sure students have access to the resources they need based on their individual circumstances. Accessibility must go beyond simply complying with legislation. I would support reviewing physical, technological and educational barriers and listening directly to students, families and employees who experience those barriers. Reconciliation must also involve meaningful action. I would support working respectfully with Indigenous communities, the Board's Indigenous Education Council and Indigenous education leaders to strengthen understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and perspectives and to address barriers experienced by Indigenous students. Inclusion means that every student should feel safe and know that bullying, discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated. At the same time, Niagara Catholic is a Catholic school system, and I believe we can respect the dignity of every individual, meet our legal responsibilities and welcome students from different backgrounds while remaining faithful to our Catholic identity and mission. As a trustee, I would also listen. Policies concerning accessibility, equity or inclusion should not simply be developed at the Board office without hearing from the students, parents, teachers and communities who are affected by them.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

School boards are an important part of our publicly funded service system, and their responsibility is to make sure education dollars are used where they have the greatest impact on students. If elected, my priorities would be protecting front-line classroom resources, strengthening special education and mental-health supports, improving student safety, and ensuring our schools and facilities are properly maintained. I would also pay close attention to student transportation and other services families depend on every day. I believe trustees have a responsibility to scrutinize budgets carefully, ask whether resources are actually reaching students and classrooms, and advocate to the Province when there are demonstrated funding gaps. At the same time, we must be accountable for how the funding we already receive is spent. Strong public services require both adequate resources and responsible stewardship. My focus would be making sure Niagara Catholic delivers reliable, accessible and high-quality education while remaining accountable to students, families, employees and taxpayers.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

My priority is simple: every student and employee should be able to come to school feeling safe, respected and supported. I would focus on preventing and responding to bullying, violence, vaping and intimidation; ensuring concerns are reported and followed up on; improving supports for students with disabilities and special-education needs; and making sure teachers and staff have the resources and training they need to maintain safe classrooms and schools. I also believe students need confidential and trusted ways to raise concerns without fear of retaliation. Parents, teachers and students should have a meaningful voice when safety policies are reviewed. Inclusion means treating every student with dignity and respect, regardless of their background or personal circumstances, while continuing to respect the Catholic identity and mission of our schools. Most importantly, policies cannot simply exist on paper. I would expect the Board to examine whether its safety and anti-bullying measures are actually working and to act when recurring problems are identified.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

I would advocate for predictable and adequate funding that puts more resources directly into classrooms, particularly for special education, educational assistants, mental-health supports and student safety. I would also advocate for funding formulas that better reflect the actual needs and costs facing individual school boards.

When students require additional supports, boards should have the resources to provide them without having to take funding away from another important priority. Finally, I believe the Ministry should preserve a meaningful role for locally elected trustees. Provincial standards and accountability are important, but local communities, parents, teachers and students should continue to have a voice in decisions affecting their schools. For Niagara Catholic, I would also advocate strongly for the continued protection and proper resourcing of Ontario's publicly funded Catholic education system.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

The Board should make mental-health support easier to access before a student reaches a crisis point. That means protecting funding for qualified mental-health professionals, ensuring students and families know where to turn for help, and reducing unnecessary delays in accessing support. I would also support stronger partnerships with community mental-health providers so students who need services beyond what a school can provide have a clear referral pathway and do not fall through the cracks. Mental health is also closely connected to school safety, bullying, attendance and academic success. Teachers and staff should receive appropriate training to recognize when a student may be struggling and know how to connect that student with qualified support. Finally, I would want the Board to regularly review whether its mental-health programs are actually meeting student needs. Funding and policies matter, but what ultimately matters is whether a student asking for help can receive meaningful support when they need it.

Niagara-On-The-Lake

Councillor

Gary Burroughs

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Generally opposed for the 3 items you list

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Definitely opposed to privatizing public services

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

That is an ongoing concern, and we need to address the challenges that continue to exist today

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public services continue to be at the forefront of healthy communities, but the challenge continues to work with residents to understand their issues, and ensure that the Town responds to their concerns, while clearly outlining the roles that municipal staff are already doing - while adjusting those programs where necessary

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Communication is the first area to expand. Currently, issues that can affect workplaces need to be well discussed with all staff, and staff should participate in finding solutions - they are on the job, and probably can find the best solutions to the challenges that may face communities staff do an amazing job, and decisions affecting their workplaces need to be discussed

Niagara-On-The-Lake

Councillor

Steve McGuinness

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

We need to be wary in setting our official plan, secondary plans and zoning bylaws to ensure our agricultural properties outside the greenbelt are not sold to owners seeking to develop large scale data centres. We should resist provincial initiatives to use MZOs to disregard and over-ride the preferences of municipal councils. Energy and water consumption should not adversely impact on resources available for residents or on the utility rates they pay.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Organized labour provides high quality services at reasonable costs and employ workers in jobs that pay living wages. Profit seeking outsource providers may not employ organized labour so worker wages can rank secondary to profit maximization for shareholders or owners. There are ways to control costs and property taxes without contracting out or privatizing services that should be explored as first options.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Ensure that our municipality re-establishes an active and well functioning diversity, equity and inclusion committee and that other committees include women, BIPOC and other members from historically underrepresented and marginalized communities

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Our residents deserve high quality service value for the taxes they pay. Our town must solicit feedback from residents on service levels and benchmark them against best practices over time. We need to close our infrastructure gap, keep taxes affordable and ensure that growth respects our heritage, community character and natural environment.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Our council should support our CAO in ensuring our workplace takes steps to monitor and improve employee morale, satisfaction and retention levels. Our municipality should strive to be an employer of choice. We must take steps to ensure that the work environment at town hall is mental health positive and that employees have career advancement pathways that appropriately balance work and other personal commitments. We should offer flexible work arrangements, including remote work options, where feasible. We should have forums for workers to submit suggestions for improving their work teams and processes. We should equip our workers with the best available tools and technology to maximize their job productivity .

Niagara-On-The-Lake

Municipal

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

First, NOTL has the best soils in Canada, specialty crop designation, and as such, I would not condone paving over valuable land for data centres. Secondly, consume massive amounts of energy, straining our local grid system; It uses a great deal of water needed for our irrigation system, and it creates environmental, light and noise pollution for nearby residents and communities. So no to AI centres.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

If the municipality does not have employees with the expertise, skill or knowledge required, then the best value for the municipality is to seek this elsewhere. However, if there are suitably skilled municipal employees that can provide the necessary expertise, skill or knowledge, then I do not believe in contracting out. Municipal employees should not lose their jobs to contracting out. If there were an ongoing need for a particular skill or expertise, then I would recommend the establishment of a new position.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I have always been an advocate of equity. I wrote the first brief on behalf of my union on gender equality in the federal government. More recently, I moved a motion for our municipality to consider equity in committee member appointments. I remind decision makers on the difference between equality and equity. NOTL's strategic plan has a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion into all decisions to remove systemic barriers and foster a sense of belonging. I ensure that this is used in making my decisions. I promote accessibility for buildings and recreation (eg trails). I know what it is like to be mobility challenged. I always check that indigenous communities are consulted on developments. Promotion of equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion is a way of thinking, which I use, not only in municipal decision making, but also in how it impacts our employees.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

A healthy community means different things to different people. Stormwater and wastewater infrastructure needs to be maintained to mitigate flooding and waste backing into homes. Roads, bridges, culverts are important for a strong community. Appropriate landuse planning for healthy neighborhoods is needed. All of these need people, professionals, technicians, etc to ensure the health of our community. The municipality is responsible for ensuring these services. Social infrastructure is also needed for a strong community, such as healthcare, accessible services, schools and seniors housing. Working with the Niagara Health System, I arranged for a walk-in clinic with a nurse practitioner for people without family doctors, for visitors and for tourists. Although we do not directly control these services, we can advocate and negotiate for stronger better services, because they are needed to make Niagara-on-the-lake thrive.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I would employ a collaborative partnership approach by: • Establishing meaningful consultation before decisions are made • Demonstrating respect throughout the process and validating the expertise of the people doing the work. • Building respect by validating the expertise of the people • Providing support during and after Implementation

Pelham

Councillor — Ward 1

Wayne Olson

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I would ask a different question. These will be highly technical and well paying jobs. That comes first for me.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I have never voted to contract out public services. In fact, I have consistently advocated for bringing the on demand transit into the ATU bargaining unit.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I have written several articles on these topics for Pelham today advocating for equality. Without equality, nothing is possible. Not gender equity, not justice, not housing equity and the list goes on and on.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

My first objective is to restore our water and wastewater services.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I invite you to ask the bargaining unit employees at Niagara Region and Niagara Transit. They are rights holders. More than that they know themselves, they know the community and they know their jobs. Their experiences are beyond valuable.

Port Colborne

Councillor — Ward 3

Amanda Emery

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Personally, I am not in support of generative AI and am incredibly wary of assistive AI. I recognize that there are applications which can streamline workflows and service delivery. I believe reliance on AI degrades human ability to problem solve, and removes the emotion and value that real people add to their jobs. I don't believe residents in Port Colborne would enjoy being provided services by generative or assistive AI, such as with chatbots or customer service delivery. With that in mind, I don't support the construction of data centres to support increased AI use.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I do not support contracting out public services unless they are services that cannot be provided by current employees and require niche, specialized equipment and skills. Contracting out public services is a form of privatization. It is more cost effective to keep public services in-house, produces better quality work, has more flexibility on response time, and enforces pride in community and work for staff. Contracting out public services also has liability risks for municipalities.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

The area I can best promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services is where I personally connect with residents. Meeting them where they're at, continuously remembering to check my own privilege, and trying my best to see from their perspective. I think communication and physical accessibility are two areas the municipality can improve upon to ensure residents are well served.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal governments should be protecting and strengthening public services, to ensure residents receive reliable and valuable services. These are also service points that uphold equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion for residents. One of my top priorities is transparency and communication, strengthening relations between residents and council to build back trust. Another top priority is healthcare in Port Colborne, with our urgent care centre slated for closure in 2028. We need to ensure we can get our residents access to equitable and 24/7 accessible healthcare, especially as 26.9% of our population is 65+.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Again, transparency and communication need to be increased, not just with residents but also with those working to provide frontline service. As a past CUPE frontline worker I know there is a variety of supports and resources out there, but it doesn't feel like the information is always readily available. There is a disconnect between staff and council, which I believe is purposeful - possibly from past concerns. It would be nice to see more information shared between the two. Personally, I recognize that if elected I will be on 2+ municipal committees/boards and I plan to work to make greater connections with frontline workers through those committees/boards.

Port Colborne

Councillor — Ward 1

Angie Desmarais

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data centres are essential infrastructure, but their rapid expansion raises legitimate concerns about water use, environmental impact, and energy consumption. I believe they must grow responsibly, with clear standards, transparency, and modern cooling and energy strategies.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Public services exist to serve residents, not shareholders — and once profit becomes the driver, costs tend to rise, transparency declines, and long-term control is weakened.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

You promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion by building systems that remove barriers, strengthen representation, and ensure every resident can participate fully in community life. These goals would be achieved by embedding them into governance, service design, hiring, engagement, and accountability — not as add-ons, but as core operating principles.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public services are the foundation of healthy, thriving communities. Municipal governments play a vital role in protecting these services by planning responsibly, investing wisely, and ensuring that essential programs remain accessible and responsive to local needs. As a councillor, my priority would be to safeguard the services residents rely on every day — clean water, safe roads, emergency response, parks, recreation, and community supports — while ensuring they are delivered efficiently and sustainably.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Frontline CUPE workers are essential, and decisions are stronger when they shape them. I would ensure early, meaningful consultation with workers, protect safe and fair working conditions, and maintain transparent, collaborative processes with CUPE so frontline expertise guides every workplace change.

Port Colborne

Councillor — Ward 2

Barbara Butters

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Not in favour of things with negative impacts

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Privatization costs more money - tax payers can't afford more

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Open discussion with groups affected and action oriented goals - listen first to understand the shortcomings

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Health care in my community and the closure in 2028 of our hospital is #1 and how we will ensure services will available- emergency services are under great pressures and have been for too long - paramedics for example -

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

In my world front line workers are too often not heard - their input should valued

What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

My views on data centres are based off the research I have done and the news I have watched and articles I have read. As of today, there does not seem to be any reason that we would want a data centre in our community. The amount of job growth and taxes from a data centre will not offset the water consumption, negative environmental impact and overall energy consumption. I would need to see more research and actual figures before it changes my view.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I believe essential public services should remain accountable to the public and be delivered in a way that protects service quality, affordability and local jobs. Public employees have valuable experience and knowledge of the community, and I believe their role should be considered before contracting out services that can be effectively and efficiently delivered internally. I would not support contracting out or privatizing a public service simply as a cost cutting measure without clear evidence that it would provide better value and maintain or improve services. Decisions should be based on facts, transparency and meaningful consultation with employees, their representatives and the community.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe everyone in our community deserves to be treated with respect and have reasonable access to the services they rely on. Equity and inclusion start with listening to people and understanding some of the barriers they may face. From an early age, we are taught to treat people the way you would want to be treated. This should be remain at the forefront of any interaction with residents. If elected, I would support practical steps to make services, facilities, communications and public spaces accessible to as many people as possible. I would also make an effort to ensure that the voices of people who may not always be heard are included when important decisions are made. I believe reconciliation requires us to listen and learn from Indigenous communities and recognize their history and connection to our community. Overall, my approach would be to treat people fairly, listen to different perspectives and make decisions that serve the community as a whole.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

I believe municipal governments have an important responsibility to protect and strengthen the public services that residents depend on everyday. If elected, my priorities would include maintaining and improving water and waste water systems, roads, parks, facilities, emergency services and other essential infrastructure. Having worked for a municipality for 17 years, I understand the importance of planning, preventative maintenance, responsible budgeting and providing services in a way that delivers value for customers/taxpayers. I would want decisions made about public services to be based on evidence, long-term planning and meaningful consideration of the impact on residents and employees.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I would work with frontline workers to make sure they have a meaningful voice in decisions that ultimately affect their work. Their experience and knowledge are valuable when making decisions about services and workplaces. I have always considered my workplace to be an "open door policy" where employees/co-workers can come to me with any issues and should always feel comfortable in doing so. As a leader, consultation from frontline workers should always be accounted for and respected.

Port Colborne

Councillor — Ward 2

Monica Szabo

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

AI's data center boom is driving an energy surge that's straining power grids, burdening local communities, and undermining tech giants' green pledges. The benefits must outweigh the downsides and from the information I gathered the negative impacts are significant especially to smaller communities.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I have worked in and for the municipal sector for most of my career. I was lucky enough to see any operations in my role assessing health and safety risks. In my experience privatization has pros and cons and careful consideration and assessment is critical in making an informed decision. It is not only about dollars and cents. Some significant cons are loss of control, reliability, accountability, access, and loss of municipal revenue.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Embedding this in all aspects of municipal operations is key and requires a systematic approach to embed these values in governance, everyday operations and community engagement.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal governments deliver core local services like clean water, safe roads, waste collection, and public education that form the foundation of a healthy community. My priorities include protecting our water resources, including our aquifer and ensuring resources are affordable, community health and safety, ensuring access to healthcare services and planned, responsible growth that protects farmland and preserves our small town character and drainage maintenance and infrastructure improvements.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Transparency and inclusiveness are important to me. In my career the most critical information came from frontline workers who understand the work and the environment. My platform is Listen, Learn and Advocate and I would apply this philosophy to CUPE members that provide critical services to our residents.

Port Colborne

Mayor

Larry Rosnuk

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I am against them, I do not see a Niagara location that would be good.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

totally against, it always comes at a higher cost.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I would treat ALL with respect and dignity

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

They should be protected. Keep our Hospital building and keep water with the Region and sewer with the Region do not take water and sewer from the Region.

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 2

Adriana Clifford

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

My view is that water consumption, electricity demand, greenhousegas emissions, and impacts on local infrastructure should all be considered when evaluating data-centre proposals. The goal should be to attract responsible investment while protecting the long-term sustainability and affordability of our community's water, energy, and other infrastructure.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I would not support contracting out or privatizing a public service simply because it is operated by the private sector, nor would I assume that municipality delivery is automatically the best option. I think that each proposal should be evaluated on its specific merits.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

My approach would focus on identifying and removing practical barriers to participation. THis includes improving physical accessibility , providing information in accessible formats and , where appropriate , multiple languages, considering affordability when setting fees, and ensuring that digital services do not exclude residents who have limited access to technology or require assistance. for Public education , I believe schools and municipalities have complementary responsibilities. students should have equitable access to safe facilities, transportation, recreational and cultural opportunities, and the supports they need to participate fully in community life.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public services are the foundation of healthy and connected community and the Municipal government has a responsibility to ensure that essential services are reliable , accessible , finacially sustainable, and responsive to the needs of residents.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Frontline workers are an essential part of delivering the public services that residents rely on every day. their experinece and knowledge shold be recognized as an important part of municipal decision-making , particularly when decisions directly affect their workplace, working conditions, or ability to deliver services. Respecting frontline workers is not just about worplace relations - it is about recognizing that the quality of public services depends on the people who deliver them.

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 5

Bill Phillips

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Concerned

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I much prefer that our services be provided by our municipal employees unless there is an emergency such as a significant storm

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

I would encourage that services are vital for Councils of workers and everyone by stressing to the provincial government that public care is vital. There is a lot we can do as a municipality other than stress our beliefs strongly to other levels of government.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Councils of CUPE members and senior staff should meet regularly to discuss issues before they become "contract issues".

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 6

Bruce Williamson

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

The building of data centres is an issue of great concern. Even in the United States a recent survey showed 75% of citizens are against them being built near where they live. I plan on bringing forward a motion requesting our planning staff to develop a policy to address their potential establishment in our city. Many other municipalities already have developed such policies. I am answering these questions as a human without the assistance of artificial intelligence.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

As a member of OSSTF District 12 and as an experienced member of City Council I see the terrific value in the work of unionized public sector employees. I have witnessed many cases where the outcomes from the efforts of in-house staff perform better both qualitatively and in financial value to taxpayers than private contractors.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe the City of St. Catharines has progressed fairly well in these areas. But that is not to say there isn't more that can be done. Cronyism and nepotism still occasionally manage to affect who gets hired and that runs contrary to promoting equity and inclusion. The antidemocratic changes the Ford government has wrought upon us in the form of eviscerating regional government; bringing in strong mayor powers; appointing the regional chair and loading the Ontario Land Tribunal with his buddies has been, to put it lightly, counterproductive to good governance.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

The fundamental answer is electing representatives who actually value public services and believe that government has a role to play in improving our quality of life. Many people I have served with do not understand the need for strong public services and actively work to undermine them. I have proven to be willing to fight for responsible government and the rule of law.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I would continue to work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made by applying the Golden Rule, which is to treat them the same way I expect to be treated. Encouragement and gratitude also go a long way in this regard.

What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I would want significantly more information before supporting or opposing a major data centre development. These projects can bring investment and economic activity, but their potential water consumption, environmental impact and energy requirements must be carefully considered alongside the number and quality of jobs they would create and their overall economic benefit to the community. Water is an extremely valuable and often undervalued resource, and I would want clear, project-specific information about how much water would be required, where it would come from, whether it would be recycled or reused, and what impact that demand could have on municipal infrastructure and the environment. The same scrutiny should apply to electricity consumption, environmental impacts, infrastructure requirements, tax revenue, job creation and any costs that could ultimately be passed on to residents. I am supportive of responsible economic development, but decisions of this magnitude should be based on evidence, not assumptions. I would want the complete picture before determining whether a particular data centre represents a net benefit to our community.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I believe residents deserve high-quality, reliable public services. I do not support contracting out or privatization simply for the sake of reducing the public workforce, nor should these decisions be driven by ideology. At the same time, I believe municipal government has a responsibility to continually evaluate how services are delivered. I am comfortable considering public, private, non-profit, or blended delivery models when appropriate. The determining factors should be service quality, accountability, reliability, working conditions, long-term costs, risk, and value for taxpayers, not whether a service is automatically assumed to be better because it is delivered publicly or privately. Any consideration of contracting out should involve a transparent assessment of the full costs and benefits, including impacts on existing employees and collective agreements. Municipal employees and their representatives should have an opportunity to demonstrate whether services can be improved or delivered more efficiently in-house before significant changes are made. My preference is continuous improvement. If a public service is working well, providing good value and meeting residents' expectations, we should recognize and support that success. Where performance can improve, the first question should be how we can make it better. But I would not remove any responsible service-delivery option from consideration if evidence demonstrates that another approach would meaningfully improve outcomes for residents. Ultimately, my responsibility would be to protect both the quality of public services and the interests of the taxpayers who fund them.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe every resident deserves to be treated with dignity and respect and to have equal access to municipal services and equal opportunity to participate in our community. My approach is centred on equality of opportunity. Municipal government should identify and remove genuine barriers that prevent people from accessing services, employment or opportunities. That includes accessible facilities and communications, appropriate accommodations for people with disabilities, and ensuring municipal services are designed to serve residents effectively. I support merit-based employment practices. Municipal hiring and advancement should be fair, transparent and based on qualifications, skills, experience, demonstrated ability and performance, while respecting collective agreements and applicable employment and human rights obligations. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to compete, and individuals should ultimately succeed based on merit. For me, inclusion means ensuring the door is genuinely open to everyone. Government should remove unnecessary barriers, provide equal access and opportunity, treat people fairly and respectfully, and ensure municipal services are available to everyone who needs them. My goal is a community where every resident has the opportunity to participate, contribute and succeed.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public services are fundamental to a strong and healthy community, and municipal government has a responsibility to ensure residents can rely on high-quality services, well-maintained infrastructure and responsive local government. Those services are ultimately delivered by people. Municipal employees bring valuable experience and institutional knowledge to their work every day, and I believe they should be partners in identifying how services can be strengthened and improved. Often, frontline employees are among the people best positioned to identify unnecessary bureaucracy, outdated processes, infrastructure needs and opportunities to serve residents better. My priority would be to create a culture of continuous improvement. Protecting public services should not mean simply preserving the status quo. It should mean investing responsibly in the people, infrastructure, technology and systems necessary to deliver excellent services while continually measuring whether we are achieving the outcomes residents expect. I would prioritize reliable infrastructure, public safety, parks and public spaces, responsive customer service, and the core municipal services residents depend upon every day. I would also benchmark St. Catharines against leading municipalities to identify opportunities to improve service quality and efficiency. I believe strong public services, respect for the people who deliver them, and responsible financial stewardship can and should coexist. My goal would be a municipality where employees are supported in doing their jobs well, residents receive excellent service, and taxpayers receive excellent value for the money they contribute.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I believe respect begins with listening. Frontline employees are often the people who understand municipal services best because they experience the systems, processes, challenges and needs of residents every day. When significant decisions affect employees or their workplaces, workers and their representatives should be consulted early enough that their experience can genuinely inform the decision, not simply notified after a decision has already been made. I would also want to examine whether there are communication gaps between frontline employees, managers, senior leadership and Council. A well-run organization needs information and ideas to move effectively in both directions. Council and senior leadership should understand what employees are experiencing on the ground, while frontline workers should understand the objectives and decisions being made at the organizational level. I would also like to see stronger mechanisms for frontline employees to contribute ideas about service delivery. The people maintaining our infrastructure, operating facilities, serving residents and delivering municipal programs can help identify unnecessary bureaucracy, outdated processes, workplace challenges and practical solutions that improve services for residents. That fits directly with my philosophy of continuous improvement. Some of the best ideas for making an organization work better can come from the people doing the work every day. Consultation does not mean everyone will always agree with every decision. Council must balance the interests of employees, residents, service quality, financial sustainability and the municipality as a whole. But those decisions should be informed by open communication and made respectfully and transparently. Ultimately, I want municipal employees to feel respected, supported and empowered to contribute. Frontline workers should not simply be asked to implement improvements, they should have meaningful opportunities to help identify and create them.

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 1

Geoffrey (Geoff) Crane

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I do not have enough information about them to give an informed decision.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Public services are just that, public. There should be no contracting out these services and they should never be privatized.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Our current system is set up to do these things. When they do not, we need to make the decision makers accountable. Goner ments

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

That is the role of public services. We need to work together to maintain community standards. We need to make city services more affordable. We need to make housing more affordable and we need to have increased communication and transparency between city hall and residents.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

We seem to have a disconnect between management and workers. We are all the same team and we all have one employer, the taxpayer. We seem to forget who funds the system. I will work to try to get workers ownership of their job. It is a huge task as it relies on compete cooperation with management and workers.

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 4

Grant Higginson

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I don't see enough benefit to justify a data centre near a residential area. Data centres take up large amounts of land and power. They run cooling equipment and backup generators around the clock, and they employ relatively few people once built. The City controls zoning, and I would not support zoning that places a data centre near homes. Where one is built, the cooling method matters. Open, evaporative cooling consumes large volumes of fresh water: the water is drawn from the watershed and lost to the atmosphere instead of being returned. Closed-loop cooling uses far less water but more electricity. I prefer closed-loop. That makes power the real question. A large data centre shouldn't draw on grid capacity that homes and other employers depend on. The developer should be required to build or fund the generation and transmission capacity its facility needs. Grid connections are regulated provincially, so this is a position I would advocate for, not something council can impose on its own. The best fit for large facilities is next to nuclear generation. Nuclear plants produce constant, 24/7 power that matches a data centre's demand, and they already have large-scale cooling-water infrastructure on site.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Core municipal services should be delivered in-house by default. Contracting out should have to prove its case. Before voting to contract out any service, I'd want a full cost comparison in front of council: the in-house option, priced honestly the contract's oversight and monitoring costs how service quality is measured and enforced what happens when the contract ends whether the City loses the equipment and expertise to bring the work back. A contract that looks cheaper in year one and costs more over ten years is a hidden cost to taxpayers, the same way deferred maintenance is. If that full comparison clearly favours a contract for a specific, specialized task, I'd consider it. I won't support privatization as a general direction. I won't vote to contract out work that hasn't been costed against keeping it in-house.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I'm running for council, so I'll answer for City services rather than education. Accessibility at the City level is mostly practical: sidewalks in good repair, with curb cuts winter sidewalk clearing City buildings and meetings people can get into and follow. A lot of that is maintenance. When a sidewalk repair gets deferred, the cost lands first on people using a wheelchair, a walker or a stroller. Inclusion means residents can find and use services. That takes plain-language information, accessible online forms, and a way to reach a person when a process doesn't fit their situation. On reconciliation, I'd support engaging Indigenous communities and organizations early on land and development decisions, before a plan is set. I'd take direction from those communities on what that engagement should look like. I'd also draw on the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee and on frontline staff, who see where residents get stuck.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

The City's job is to deliver the services residents rely on and to keep the assets behind them in good condition: roads, sewers, water distribution, parks, fire, by-law and libraries. Protecting public services starts with not letting that infrastructure decay. Deferred maintenance is a hidden tax increase. It gets paid later, at a higher price, often as an emergency. My priorities if elected: Infrastructure renewal, including faster action on basement flooding prevention. Property standards and by-law enforcement that is actually used, including on the former GM site. The City has had that authority the entire time, and orders are now in place. Faster permitting, by fixing coordination between departments rather than adding rules or fees. Housing approvals that default to yes when qualified planning staff recommend approval. One-time money goes to capital, never operating, so a one-year windfall doesn't become a permanent shortfall.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Frontline staff usually see a process failing before anyone else does. They know which permits stall between departments, which equipment is past its life, and where residents get stuck. Specifically: Before I vote on a change to how a service is delivered, I'll ask whether the staff who deliver it were consulted and what they said. If the report doesn't say, I'll ask for it. My permitting reform proposal depends on fixing coordination between departments. That can't be done well without the people who do the work. I'll respect the collective bargaining process. Council sets the mandate, and bargaining happens at the table, not through individual councillors. Staffing and equipment are part of the service. Cutting them to hit a budget line without looking at the service just moves the cost somewhere else. This is personal for me. My father spent 35 years in municipal public service, in waterworks and public safety.

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 1

Jacqueline (Jackie) Lindal

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data centres consume too much valuable resources, consume energy which could raise the costs for residents and have a negative impact on the environment

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Contractors do NOT always do as good a job as our city workers. Often it's the lowest bid and the old saying "you get what you pay for" applies. There are some good contractors out there but city staff are just as good if not better at a good job

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I'm a retired teacher and making sure everyone feels seen, heard and valued is important everywhere

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

CUPE is an important union and cities and public officials should work closely with the union. Listening to union reps, seeing where and how they work, participating with them in events so you can see and hear what they need and want. Workplace safety and inclusion should be first on any list

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 2

Jim Adair

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I fear the environmental impact will be far greater than the constituency realizes

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

We can't keep selling off our services the loss of these jobs for profit will have a devastating effect everyday workers

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

We have to let everyone know that they are a part of the community and welcome

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Better communication and transparency with the frontline workers

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I believe a continuous improvement committee with union members would go a long way in getting the input of the everyday worker and improving our relations

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 3

Mark Stevens

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I have not looked into this issue enough to provide an educated answer

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

When staffing is an issue or in an emergency we might have to contract out to provide the services our residents expect

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

By looking at the recommendations provided to us by our citizen committees

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

We have to make sure that the services provided are the best that can be delivered and at an affordable cost to the taxpayers

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

That senior staff report to council when major decisions are needed that affect our workers

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 6

Marty Mako

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data centres are to be approached with caution at a municipal level. They can bring investment and employment, but their significant electricity, water and infrastructure needs must be carefully considered. I would only support proposals that demonstrate responsible resource use, appropriate environmental safeguards, sufficient infrastructure capacity and a clear benefit to the community.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I support strong, reliable, high quality public services and do not view contracting out as a primary objective. However service-delivery models should be reviewed periodically to ensure quality, accountability, costs and value for taxpayers are kept a priority. Where public employees provide an effective and competitive service, I support maintaining that capacity in-house and consulting employees before any significant changes are made.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Municipal services should be accessible and welcoming to every resident. I support removing physical, communication and other barriers, incorporating accessibility into everyday service delivery. I also support continuing meaningful engagement with Indigenous partners and advancing reconciliation through education, relationship-building and action.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal government should provide reliable, sustainable public services while ensuring taxpayers receive good value. I would prioritize core services and infrastructure including roads, water, wastewater, stormwater, parks and recreation, while reducing duplication and avoiding short-term decisions that defer necessary maintenance and infrastructure costs.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Frontline employees often have the best understanding of how services work and where improvements can be made. I support meaningful consultation before significant workplace decisions, safe workplaces, appropriate training and equipment, and respectful labour-management relationships. Strong leaders listen to the people doing the work.

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 6

Mike Brousseau

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I continually seek to include as many voices as possible in the public discourse through a commitment to radical transparency and equity for all. The public services should first and foremost serve the public, and this means each and every member of our community must be able to engage in whichever ways they are able. This means I do everything I can to gather distinct points of view when considering issues, listen before I speak, and advocate for the rights of all members of our organizations.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public education, like all public organizations, provide essential and equitable services to our communities. While we should endeavour to provide these services efficiently, it's truly the effectiveness of these services which should be our primary measure. Profits should never play into delivering truly exceptional and critical services to our students which is why I do not support the privatization of education. Instead of a profit center, public education should be an investment in the future of our County with curious, creative, and open-minded students growing up into adults who will solve our big problems both today and tomorrow.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

Students can not learn if they do not feel safe, both physically and mentally, within our schools. This means allowing students to be their authentic selves without fear of punishment. This means respecting student choice. And this means investing in our facilities and staff to ensure our classrooms are physically safe from dangers and harm.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

Most clearly, the province needs to improve the overall level of funding to education in Ontario. We continue to see irresponsibly low levels of funding, especially in smaller or shrinking boards. Further, to be effective our staff must be paid competitively, our communities must have local autonomy to support local priorities, and we must continue to update and align curriculum with the real world students will be stepping into. This ministry, and this minister in particular, is acting as the tsar of education ignoring educators and parents and weakening our public education system to the detriment of students.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

The board should be continually advocating for policies that respect students personal expression, investing in training and supports for staff in mental health, and focus on wholistic teaching and learning not outdated and punitive forms of testing and evaluation.

St. Catharines

Councillor — ward4

Noah Machek

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

1. I do not support any data centres. they have a negative impact on our climate and the environment and natural resources

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

2. I believe all city maintenance should not be subcontracted out. Snow removal, arborist, park maintenance, emergency repairs. should be in house work. I don't support privatization of any public services.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

1. I believe by learning about equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion is the first step. Then by being an advocate for equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion and make sure everyone is treated with kindness and respect.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

1. I believe the city should play a big role in all the public services as it affects the community around you the most. Strengthen by being a voice for better funding for public services. By advocating for public services to stay public at the municipal level.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

3. By being transparent and upfront about any changes to the workplace., checking in on how CUPE members are doing, and by showing up and listening to members concerns.

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 4

Robin McPherson

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I have real concerns about the rapid growth of data centres, particularly around how much water and electricity they use and the impact they can have on municipal infrastructure and the environment. This is something I've been working on through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. FCM has been pushing the federal government for a national approach that looks at energy and water use, infrastructure, environmental impacts and making sure communities actually benefit when these facilities are built. I've also had several conversations with Hamilton Councillor Ninder Nann about the motion she brought forward and the work Hamilton is doing to put proper rules in place. I think St. Catharines needs to do the same. I support putting a pause on new data centres while we develop clear standards. We shouldn't be figuring this out after an application lands on our desk — particularly when the pressures on water, energy and infrastructure can ultimately affect the public services residents rely on.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I believe public services should be delivered publicly wherever possible. Over the last four years, I've had the opportunity to spend time alongside many of the people who deliver City services, and I've seen firsthand the value they bring that doesn't show up on a spreadsheet. I've learned about how a snowplow crew made sure a street was cleared so a family could get out to attend a funeral. I've seen aquatics staff keep coffee cups for the "regulars" who enjoy a coffee together after their swim. I've seen City workers make sure some of the most vulnerable people in our community have water, warm clothing and connections to community services. That's public service. It's not just completing a task. It's knowing the community and treating people with compassion, care and dignity. Council absolutely has a responsibility to look carefully at costs, but the cheapest option on paper isn't always the best value for residents. We need to recognize the experience, relationships, institutional knowledge and public accountability that come with having good public services delivered by good public-sector workers.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I think this has to apply both to the services we provide to residents and to the City as a workplace. For residents, it starts with listening to the people who use our services and recognizing that people experience our City in different ways. Accessibility and inclusion aren't just about being able to get into a building. They're about whether someone can participate in recreation, use our parks, understand City information, access programs and feel welcome and respected when they do. I've seen our City workers put that into practice — whether it's making sure someone experiencing homelessness has water on a hot day, helping connect someone with community services or simply knowing the regulars who come through a City facility every week. Those everyday interactions matter. Treating people with dignity matters. But we need to apply those same values inside the organization. The City is also an employer. Our own staff should work in an environment where people are treated fairly and with respect, where workplaces and opportunities are accessible, where different experiences and perspectives are valued, and where people feel that they belong. The same is true of reconciliation. It needs to be reflected not only in our relationship with the community, but in how we operate as an organization, the relationships we build and the decisions we make. Equity, accessibility, reconciliation and inclusion shouldn't be separate initiatives. They should be part of how we deliver services, how we treat our employees and how we make decisions every day.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public services are at the heart of what municipalities do. Roads, parks, libraries, recreation, fire services, snow clearing, water and wastewater — they're the things people rely on every day. But I've also learned that public

service is about much more than the service itself. It's the people delivering it and the pride and care they bring to their work. We've increased infrastructure spending by about 30% this term, to roughly \$30 million a year, while keeping the City portion of tax increases below 3% for the last three years. I want to build on that. We also need the provincial and federal governments at the table. Through my work on the FCM Board, I've been advocating for a better municipal funding model. Municipalities own and maintain about 60% of Canada's public infrastructure but receive only about eight cents of every tax dollar. Protecting public services means investing in infrastructure, but it also means investing in the people who deliver those services and making sure municipalities have the resources to do the job properly.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

One of the things I've made a point of doing as a councillor is getting out from behind the Council desk and spending time with the people who actually do the work. I've done ride-alongs and job shadowing with snowplow operators, firefighters, downtown cleanup crews, aquatics and library staff, and spent time at places like the carousel and Morningstar Mill. Those experiences have given me a very different understanding of our City services. I've seen the skill involved in the work, but I've also seen the compassion and care that our employees bring to it — often in small ways that most people will never hear about. You learn a lot more sitting beside someone doing their job than you ever will from a staff report. I saw the challenges that our City staff face on a daily basis. It has reinforced for me that frontline workers need to be part of the conversation when we're making decisions that affect their work. They know where the pressures are, what works, what doesn't and, very often, what could work better. Going out with our crews is something I will absolutely continue to do. I've also encouraged my Council colleagues to do the same and will continue to do that. I think every councillor benefits from seeing the work firsthand, talking directly with the people doing it and understanding how the decisions we make around the Council table actually affect the people delivering our services.

St. Catharines

Councillor — Ward 5

Spencer Bellows-DeWolfe

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

If a data centre is proposed in St. Catharines, I'd want a full assessment covering a few key areas before moving forward: Infrastructure & Energy: Clear plans for water and power draw, ensuring current residents don't face reliability issues or higher bills. Sustainability: Pushing for low-water cooling, waste heat recovery, and strict management of noise, traffic, and stormwater. Economic Return: A realistic look at jobs and tax benefits versus the strain on local resources. Fair Cost Allocation: Taxpayers must be protected, the facility needs to cover its fair share of all required infrastructure upgrades.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I think you always need to be open minded, especially for what is best for the residents and the city as a whole. I would take the approach to keep essential services accountable to the City and ensure residents continue to receive reliable service. Competitively bid appropriate services where qualified private providers can demonstrate better value. Require clear service standards, performance measures and penalties for failing to meet them. Review existing contracts regularly to ensure taxpayers are receiving what they are paying for. Bring services back in-house if contracting out no longer provides better value.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe every resident and student deserves to feel included, respected and supported. As a teacher, I understand the importance of recognizing individual needs and removing barriers. I would promote accessible municipal services, affordable recreation, clear communication and meaningful engagement with diverse communities. Through listening, collaboration and accountability, we can ensure St. Catharines is a welcoming city where everyone has the opportunity to participate and succeed.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal government has a responsibility to protect reliable, accessible public services that residents depend on every day. If elected, my priorities would be getting back to basics, maintaining roads, parks, infrastructure and snow removal, fixing aging sewer systems, and ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. I believe in strong public services that deliver real value and strengthen our community.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I am a teacher and my brother is completing his plumbing apprenticeship in Niagara, I understand the importance of essential services. You need to advocate, collaborate, and educate to allow others to know the stance you fight for.

St. Catharines

Mayor

Ann-Marie Zammit

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data centres are a scourge on the environment. Until the tech bros can come up with a way to not destroy the planet, I will not support any data centres being built in Niagara.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

No to privatization! Public services must remain public. We have seen the disasters that happen to public services when they are sold off to private corporations. I do not support privatization or contracting out the work.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I will utilize citizen advisory committees to their full potential. From observation, the recommendations from such committees have not yet been seriously implemented. Consultation with the public with lived experience is essential to delivering equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal governments must protect public services. My priority will be to keep public services such as water/wastewater and transit public.

St. Catharines

Mayor

Anthony A. Adeoye

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I support responsible data-centre investment that creates meaningful economic and employment opportunities, but not at the expense of our water, environment, infrastructure or taxpayers. Projects should be assessed for water and energy use, environmental impact and infrastructure capacity, while encouraging water-saving technologies such as closed-loop cooling. Data centres must pay their fair share of the costs they create. Economic growth and environmental responsibility must go hand in hand.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I believe essential public services should remain publicly accountable and, wherever practical, publicly delivered. Contracting out should not be used simply to reduce staffing costs or undermine good local jobs and collective agreements. CUPE has raised concerns that privatization can reduce public accountability and local control. Where specialized outside expertise is genuinely required, any decision should be based on transparent evidence of cost, service quality, accountability and impact on workers. My priority would be delivering reliable, affordable public services while respecting workers and ensuring taxpayers receive value for their money.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe municipal services must be accessible, inclusive and respectful so that every resident has a fair opportunity to participate and be heard. I would focus on removing physical, financial, language and systemic barriers, while ensuring diverse and underrepresented communities have meaningful input into municipal decisions. St. Catharines already has accessibility and equity advisory structures that can help identify and remove these barriers. Reconciliation must also go beyond words. I would support continued partnership and dialogue with Indigenous communities, building on the City's existing relationship with the Niagara Regional Native Centre. My goal is simple: municipal services should work for everyone, regardless of background, income, ability or circumstance.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal government has a responsibility to protect reliable, accessible and accountable public services. Ontario's Municipal Act specifically recognizes municipalities' roles in providing necessary services, managing public assets and supporting the economic, social and environmental well-being of their communities. If elected, my priorities would be protecting frontline services and workers, investing in essential infrastructure, maintaining strong public ownership and accountability, and eliminating administrative waste rather than cutting services residents depend on. St. Catharines residents rely on municipal services including fire protection, roads, snow removal, parks, recreation and libraries. Strong public services and responsible financial management must go hand in hand. Every tax dollar should deliver measurable value to residents.

St. Catharines

Municipal

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

In general, I am against the use of AI, especially generative AI. It wastes and pollutes our water, takes jobs away from workers, and encourages the atrophy of our ability to think and problem-solve. I will always advocate for the city to hire artists, translators, coders, and other workers in place of an expensive and sub-par machine. It may cost more upfront to hire human people, but every dollar we pay a worker is an investment in our own community, and the supposed savings we would gain from using AI are cheap and even counter-productive to long-term community well-being. I believe strongly in the skill, intelligence, and nuancing capacities of human beings. There may be limited opportunity for the municipality to appropriately use AI to manage and maintain databases and other similar automated processes, or to assist workers in their work, but these processes will still need to be supervised by a live human to prevent error. I continue to have concerns about AI's environmental impact and its effect on our society broadly.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Studies have shown that costs go up, and transparency and accountability goes down when most municipal services are taken over by private contractors. I am strongly pro-public services. This keeps good jobs in our local economy, and provides good value for money for the public at large.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

While there was talk in 2023 about a DEI Action Plan issuing from city staff, at the instruction of council, one has yet to emerge. As a councillor I would push for this initiative to be fully implemented. Council must make decisions which include an equity lens and which are based on relevant data. This includes how municipal workers are hired and how their work is managed, and directly affects the public. Amongst other initiatives, I would also like to see the city offer twice a year free public education courses on Indigenous history and present realities as part of its commitment to reconciliation, in addition to the training it currently offers to staff and elected officials.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

I strongly agree that public services are essential to healthy communities. To that end, the public will find me staunchly pro public water. I expect that in the near future we will see pushes to privatize some or all of our water processes, and I will oppose this every step of the way. Water is a joint responsibility between St. Catharines and the Region. Keeping it public is the best way to keep our water safe, affordable, and its delivery and billing transparent. To privatize our water would also in my view violate the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Treaty, to which we are all party. I will fight to keep and create living wage jobs which build our community and economy both within city positions, and as we consider attracting more job creators to our city.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

I am a member of a union (ACTRA), an association (CAEA), and have served on the communications and negotiating committees in my work as a communications roleplayer-coach. I have personally benefitted from and worked for collective bargaining, and I am committed to others enjoying the same benefits. At council, I would continue to make connections and appropriate relationships with labour leaders, support motions and processes which allowed workers to exercise their rights, and encourage my fellow councillors and the public to take pride in being a city where these values were upheld.

Thorold

Councillor

Chantal McCollum

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data centres consume significant amount of water and energy, with the potential to have a negative environmental impact. This may include adverse air quality impacts given back up fossil fuel electricity generation. They do not have much of an economic benefit either. It is very unlikely that I would support the development of a data centre in Thorold.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I am not in favour of contracting out or privatizing public services. Municipalities should look at developing and maintaining expertise in house, and making sure staff have good jobs with benefits and post-retirement income security.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion can be addressed by ensuring that services, programs and engagement are accessible. This would mean looking to legislation, such as the AODA to ensure compliance, but making sure that barriers are removed that may exclude residents from accessing services. With respect to reconciliation, municipalities should work with indigenous organizations or groups directly for engagement, so history, culture and perspectives can be incorporated into decision making regarding public spaces and initiatives. I support municipal policies and investments into building bridges so that decisions made will be a benefit to everyone in the community.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal governments have a responsibility to protect services, invest in infrastructure, and ensure residents receive reliable and accessible services. Municipal governments should reject the provincial government's agenda to privatize water & wastewater systems, for example. If elected, I would prioritize sustainable investment in roads, water and wastewater infrastructure, transit, libraries, parks, recreation, and community safety. I would also focus on long-term planning so that infrastructure is properly maintained.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Frontline workers understand municipal services best because they deliver these services. I believe staff should have the opportunity to provide input when decisions directly affect their workplaces and the services they provide. If elected, I would support open communication with employees and their representatives, fair collective bargaining including the right to strike, and consultation before significant workplace or service-delivery changes are made. I would also support safe working conditions including the right to refuse unsafe work, appropriate staffing, and training and resources employees need to do their jobs effectively. Respecting frontline workers means better public services for residents.

Thorold

Councillor

David Jim Handley

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

DATA CENTRES — STUDY FIRST, DECIDE SECOND I believe Thorold needs to proceed carefully when it comes to data centres. That is why I proactively brought forward a motion calling for a comprehensive study before the City moves forward with allowing data-centre development. These facilities can have significant demands on electricity and infrastructure, and there are legitimate questions about environmental impacts, water, noise, land use, grid capacity and the potential costs or benefits to our taxpayers. I believe residents deserve answers before decisions are made — not after. My position is straightforward: let's do the research, understand the impacts and have the public discussion first. I have called for the incoming 2027 Council to receive a comprehensive report within 180 days so Council and residents can make an informed decision about whether, where and under what conditions data centres should be considered in Thorold. I'm not saying "yes" or "no" before we have the facts. I'm saying Thorold should have the facts first. That's responsible planning and responsible decision-making.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

My Position on Contracting Out or Privatizing Municipal Services Dear Residents of Thorold, As we approach the municipal election, I believe residents deserve to know where candidates stand on the future delivery of municipal services. When it comes to contracting out or privatizing municipal work, my position is straightforward: we should not contract out municipal services simply because someone claims it will save money. Any decision must be based on facts, accountability and long-term value for taxpayers. Before the City considers contracting out a service currently provided by municipal employees, residents should be able to see a clear comparison between the full cost of delivering that service in-house and the actual cost of having a private company provide it. That comparison should include wages, benefits, equipment, administration, supervision, contract management and all other associated costs. We also need to consider service quality, response times, accountability and the impact on our experienced municipal workforce. I am not opposed to contracting out where there is clear evidence that it will provide better value and maintain or improve the level of service residents receive. But privatization should never become an objective in itself. My commitment is to protect taxpayers, maintain quality municipal services and make decisions based on evidence—not ideology. Before we hand a municipal service to a private contractor, let's prove that it is actually in the best interests of the residents of Thorold.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion Municipal government should work for everyone, and I believe equity, accessibility and inclusion have to be part of how decisions are made—not something considered after the fact. If re-elected, I would ensure that accessibility and inclusion are considered at the beginning of municipal projects, policies and programs. That means asking: Who could face a barrier from this decision, and what can we do to remove it? I would support meaningful consultation with residents who have lived experience, including seniors, people with disabilities, newcomers, low-income residents and other members of our community. Their voices should be heard before decisions are made, not simply after. I would also make sure Council continues to use the expertise of the City's accessibility and diversity, equity and inclusion advisory committees. Thorold already has these structures in place; the important thing is ensuring their recommendations are heard and considered by Council. Accessibility must include more than buildings. It includes sidewalks, parks, recreation, transportation, public meetings, municipal communications, websites and access to information. It also means providing reasonable ways for residents to participate in civic life. My approach would be simple: identify barriers, listen to the people affected, find practical solutions and measure whether we actually removed those barriers. Everyone who calls Thorold home deserves an equal opportunity to participate in our community and have their voice heard.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

I believe the municipality and school boards have an important role in protecting the well-being of our community. While each has its own responsibilities, they should work together on issues that affect residents, families and especially our children and youth. As a municipality, I believe we must provide safe, accessible parks and recreational facilities, responsible infrastructure, affordable community programs and safe routes to schools. We also need to listen to residents and address issues that affect their quality of life. I would support stronger cooperation between the City, school boards, community organizations and other levels of government where our responsibilities overlap. This includes emergency preparedness, accessibility, recreation, transportation, youth programs and the shared use of community facilities. Protecting community well-being also means making responsible decisions about growth, the environment, housing and municipal spending. We need to consider not only today's needs, but the community we are leaving for our children and grandchildren. My approach would be simple: listen to the community, work collaboratively, respect each organization's mandate and put the safety, accessibility and well-being of residents first.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

How would I assure front-line workers are respected? Front-line municipal workers are the people who deliver many of the services residents depend on every day. I believe they deserve to be treated with respect, fairness and dignity. As a councillor, I would ensure that front-line employees have a meaningful voice when decisions are being made that affect their work. Before considering contracting out services, changing work practices or introducing new policies, I would want management and Council to understand the impact on the employees who actually deliver those services. Respect also means providing a safe workplace, appropriate training and the equipment necessary for employees to do their jobs properly. It means recognizing good work and maintaining open communication between Council, management and staff. I would also expect concerns raised by front-line employees to be taken seriously and addressed through the proper channels, without retaliation or politics becoming part of the workplace. Most importantly, I believe Council should remember that municipal employees are not simply a line in the budget. They are members of our community who provide essential services to our residents. My commitment would be simple: listen to our front-line workers, respect their contribution, keep them informed and make decisions based on what is best for both employees and the residents they serve.

Thorold

Councillor

Gurinder Kaur

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

I support responsible development, but data centres must be carefully planned. They can use large amounts of water and electricity, so we need to make sure they do not put unnecessary pressure on our local resources or increase costs for residents. I would support projects that use energy and water efficiently, protect the environment, and provide clear benefits to our community. Growth and technology are important, but they must be sustainable and responsible.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

believe essential public services should remain publicly accountable and focused on serving residents, not generating profit. I am generally against privatizing or contracting out core public services when it could reduce accountability, service quality, or good local jobs. Before any service is contracted out, I believe Council should clearly demonstrate that it provides better value and maintains or improves the quality and reliability residents expect.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe every resident deserves equal access to municipal services and opportunities, regardless of age, ability, background, culture, or income. I would support accessible facilities and programs, inclusive community engagement, and removing barriers that prevent people from participating. Reconciliation also requires listening, learning, and building respectful relationships with Indigenous communities. As an educator, I believe education, respect, and understanding are essential to building a community where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and heard.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Municipal governments have an important responsibility to protect reliable, affordable, and accessible public services. Residents should feel that their tax dollars are providing real value in their everyday lives. If elected, my priorities would include improving public transit, maintaining roads and infrastructure, supporting parks and recreation, strengthening community and library services, and advocating for affordable childcare and after-school opportunities. I would focus on responsible spending while making sure essential services remain strong and accessible to everyone.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Frontline workers are the backbone of our public services, and they deserve respect, fair treatment, and a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their work. I believe Council should maintain open communication with CUPE members, listen to their concerns, and consult workers before making major workplace or service-delivery decisions. If elected, I would support a respectful working relationship that values their experience, safety, and contributions to our community.

Thorold

Councillor

Rhianon Burkholder

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I would make sure all our policy's are inclusive so every student and staff feel safe and included

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

A healthy community includes schools locally for our students to attend. I make it a priority to ensure schools stay as part of the community

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

again to make sure all our policies and culture of the school are aware and include everything necessary to be safe and inclusive

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

to allow school Boards to manage the locally without all the government involvement. Each Board should not be painted with the same brush and all the regulation do not necessary apply to all

What should the board do to support student mental health?

Awareness to start. Also to have things in place to manage. If beyond the scope of education to support the student or staff to seek outside professional help

Wainfleet

Councillor

Jeannette PIETERSE

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Wainfleet is not suited to that kind of commercial development

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

The cost savings and service provided need to be closely analyzed to make an informed decision

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Listen to all parties, consider the needs and shortcomings Plan for change where needed

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

My priority is to provide all services in responsible spending manner while delivering the best possible public services while maintaining a positive and cooperative relationship with all staff

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Include their input in all decisions

Wainfleet

Councillor

Lee BOTT

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Against them. If they are needed, let them find their own sources for energy such as solar facilities on site.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

We get so little for our tax dollars now. Against privatizing health care. We are not the USA. And we don't want to be.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

As an HR professional, my position has always been equality, etc. To serve our residents, that includes our residents. Its time our residents are heard and considered above the powers that be in higher government. When is it fair to the people?

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Working for the people. Not for higher government. Its time our tax dollars fund things in our community and not others. We have funded projects for the Niagar Region that people in our community don't use or have access to while pur community goes without.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Open door policy. Everyone should have a voice and be listened to. But that being said, employees are responsible to do their jobs. If you aren't doing your job, your job should end.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I believe every student deserves the opportunity to succeed, feel safe, be treated with dignity, and have access to the supports they need. Equity does not necessarily mean treating everyone exactly the same; it means recognizing that students may face different challenges and ensuring those barriers do not prevent them from succeeding. As trustee, I would begin by listening. That means engaging directly with students, parents, educators, educational assistants, support staff, Indigenous partners and community organizations to better understand where barriers exist and what is working well. Accessibility must also be practical. Students with disabilities and special education needs should have timely access to appropriate supports, accessible facilities and learning environments. I would want the Board to measure areas such as wait times for services, availability of supports and student and parent experiences so we can identify where improvement is needed. Reconciliation requires more than acknowledgement. I would support continued education about Indigenous history, cultures and the legacy of residential schools, while listening to Indigenous communities about how the Board can build meaningful and respectful relationships. Inclusion also means ensuring that every student—regardless of ability, background, race, culture, faith, sexual orientation, gender identity or family circumstances—is treated with dignity and protected from discrimination and bullying. Finally, I believe the employees who work with students every day have an important perspective. Teachers, educational assistants, custodians, clerical staff and other education workers often see barriers and potential solutions before they appear in a report. I would want those voices included when the Board evaluates policies and services. My approach would be consistent with the philosophy I bring to this campaign: listen to the people affected, measure whether our policies and resources are producing results, and improve where they are not. Inclusion should ultimately be measured by the experience and success of the students we serve.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

I believe a strong publicly funded Catholic education system is an essential public service and an investment in the future of our communities. School boards have a responsibility to protect that system while ensuring that the resources entrusted to them are used effectively, responsibly and where they have the greatest impact on students. Public education depends on much more than what happens in the classroom. Educational assistants, custodians, clerical staff, maintenance workers, early childhood educators, teachers, administrators and other support professionals all contribute to creating safe, welcoming and effective learning environments. I believe trustees need to understand and respect the contribution of every part of that team. If elected, my first priority would be ensuring that resources are directed toward the services that most directly support student achievement, safety and well-being. I would pay particular attention to special education and student supports, safe and well-maintained schools, academic achievement, attendance, mental-health supports and ensuring employees have the tools and resources necessary to do their jobs effectively. At the same time, protecting public services requires responsible financial stewardship. I would support reviewing administrative processes, procurement, facilities and other expenditures to identify efficiencies before looking at reductions to front-line student services. I also believe trustees need to listen to the people delivering these services. Front-line employees often know where systems are working well and where unnecessary processes or resource gaps are creating problems. My approach would be straightforward: protect the services that directly benefit students, listen to the people providing those services, use public resources responsibly, measure results, and continually look for ways to improve.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

My priority is to ensure that every student who walks into a Niagara Catholic school feels safe, respected and able to learn. I believe inclusion should ultimately be measured by the actual experiences of our students, not simply by the policies we have in place. That begins with maintaining safe schools and taking bullying,

harassment, discrimination and violence seriously. Students need to know where to turn when they have a problem, feel comfortable reporting concerns, and have confidence that those concerns will be addressed appropriately and consistently. I would also prioritize appropriate supports for students with disabilities and special education needs, access to mental-health resources, accessible learning environments, and ensuring that students from different backgrounds and circumstances are treated with dignity and respect. Creating safe schools also requires listening to the people who are there every day. Teachers, educational assistants, custodians, clerical staff and other education workers often see emerging safety and inclusion concerns first. Their experience should be part of identifying problems and developing solutions. As trustee, I would also want the Board to measure how well we are doing. That means looking at indicators such as bullying and safety concerns, student belonging, attendance, access to supports and student and parent feedback—and then acting when the results show that improvement is needed. Our Catholic schools should be communities where the dignity of every person is respected, differences are treated with compassion, and every student knows that they belong.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

If elected, I would advocate for the Ontario Ministry of Education to focus resources on the areas where parents, students and front-line education workers are telling us the pressures are greatest. One of my highest priorities would be special education. Students who require additional support should have timely access to educational assistants, assessments and appropriate professional services. I would advocate for funding that better reflects the actual level of student need and for greater transparency around wait times and access to those supports. I would also advocate for adequate front-line staffing and manageable classroom environments. Teachers, educational assistants and other education workers need the time and resources to focus on what they do best—educating and supporting students. Just as importantly, I believe Ontario should strive to provide our teachers and education workers with world-class training and professional development. Education is constantly evolving. New teaching methods, technology, artificial intelligence, approaches to special education, mental-health awareness and strategies for managing increasingly complex classrooms are creating both challenges and opportunities. We should invest in giving our educators access to high-quality, practical training that helps them continually develop their skills and bring proven best practices into the classroom. Investing in the people who work directly with students is one of the most important investments we can make in student success. Student safety and mental health would also be a priority. Schools are increasingly being asked to respond to complex behavioural and mental-health challenges. The Ministry needs to ensure that boards have access to appropriate professionals and community partnerships while maintaining safe working and learning environments for both students and staff. I would also advocate for greater predictability in education funding. School boards need to be able to plan beyond a single budget year, particularly when making decisions about staffing, student supports and long-term programs. At the same time, I believe additional funding must come with accountability. More money alone does not guarantee better outcomes. We should establish clear measures to determine whether investments are improving student achievement, reducing wait times, improving attendance, strengthening school safety and providing students with the supports they need. My message to the Ministry would be straightforward: listen to parents and front-line education workers, properly fund the areas of greatest student need, invest in the skills and development of the people who educate our children, give boards the ability to plan responsibly, and measure whether those investments are producing better outcomes for students.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

Student mental health is fundamental to student success. A child who is struggling with anxiety, depression, bullying, isolation or other mental-health challenges may have difficulty learning, attending school and reaching their potential. I believe the Board's first priority should be early identification and timely access to appropriate support. Teachers and education workers spend significant time with students and are often among the first to recognize that something has changed. They should receive practical training to recognize warning signs and understand how to connect a student with the appropriate resources, while leaving diagnosis and treatment to qualified mental-health professionals. The Board should also strengthen partnerships with community healthcare and mental-health organizations. Schools cannot and should not be expected to provide every service themselves. Building effective referral pathways can help students and families reach the right professional as quickly as possible. Prevention is equally important. Safe schools, strong relationships with

trusted adults, effective responses to bullying, physical activity, extracurricular opportunities and a genuine sense of belonging can all contribute to student well-being. I also believe we need to listen directly to students. We should regularly ask whether they feel safe, whether they feel they belong, whether they know where to go when they need help, and whether they can access that help when they need it. Finally, we need to measure whether our approach is working. I would want the Board to monitor appropriate indicators such as access to supports, wait times, attendance, school climate and student feedback. We should protect student privacy while still having enough system-level information to identify gaps and improve services. Our goal should be straightforward: recognize concerns early, make it easy to ask for help, connect students with qualified support quickly, and create school environments where every student knows there is someone willing to listen.

Welland

Councillor — Ward 1

Kiron Bondale

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

While many data centres have been creating a heavy impact without offsetting those impacts, if a company proposes to establish one which has a zero impact footprint it can help to keep data about Canadian residents in Canada. In Welland especially there are plenty of brownfield sites where a data center might be built but again, it HAS to be zero impact.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Unless those services cannot be provided by existing public service staff due to heightened demand or specific skill sets which are not available, the work should remain with public services. I am NOT in favor of privatization as that has been repeatedly shown to result in worst outcomes.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Having appropriate policies, measures, and guardrails can help as well as training of everyone who is in a decision making position.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

While funding might come from federal or provincial levels, municipal governments & school boards are where the actual work happens in public service delivery. As such, providing effective & efficient public services becomes primarily the responsibility of this level of government. My priorities are to restore respect & credibility in Welland's Council, protect resident's taxes & support development proposals which maintain or enhance quality of life for existing residents.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Ensure that there is proactive engagement of CUPE representatives when City or Council decisions might impact their work

Welland

Councillor — Ward 6

Lisa Mooney

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I would promote equity, accessibility, and inclusion by listening to students, families, and communities who face barriers and ensuring their voices shape Board decisions. Reconciliation must also be an ongoing commitment, working meaningfully with Indigenous communities, strengthening Indigenous education, honouring Indigenous perspectives and history, and ensuring students understand the truth and legacy of residential schools.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

School boards are essential public services and major employers in our communities, and strong public education depends on a strong, respected workforce. I would prioritize meaningful engagement with unions and employees, respect collective bargaining and negotiated agreements, and advocate for safe, supportive working conditions while ensuring the resources needed to serve students are protected.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

My priority is creating schools where every student and staff member feels safe, respected, supported, and able to belong. I would advocate for strong supports for students and staff, with particular attention to underserved and marginalized communities, and ensure that concerns about safety, discrimination, or inclusion are heard and addressed.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

I would advocate for the Province to properly fund public education through a comprehensive review and modernization of the education funding formula. Funding must reflect the real needs of today's students, including special education, mental health, staffing, and school capacity, so Boards can provide the supports students need without compromising financial stability.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

The Board should ensure students have timely access to mental health supports within their schools, with a focus on early intervention and prevention. We also need strong partnerships with community agencies so students and families can be connected to specialized services when needed, while ensuring staff have the training and resources to recognize when a student needs help.

Welland

Councillor

Matthew Julian GRAHAM

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

By voicing support for all these such that they best serve all residents and students of the region.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Education is quintessential to forming a healthy and strong community. My priority would be to ensure growth in all these areas while limiting if not outright eliminating any erosion.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

My priority is ensuring all students feel safe and included.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

I would advocate for ensuring the funding that is required is disbursed and stabilized.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

The board should expand mental health services to ensure students have the best scholastic outcomes possible.

Welland

Councillor — Ward 6

Paul Turner

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

Already heavily involved in all the above, multi cultural, chair of city for affordable housing always promoting an inclusive environment. Was responsible for flying pride flag for our Catholic school board/

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Support for support staff and teachers. My record for last two terms speak to that.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

Mentioned above and promoting wellness and mental health.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

More funding on all levels especially for mental health. Better pay for support staff and better working conditions.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

More access to support systems. Smaller class sizes.

Welland

Councillor — Ward 6

Sue Barnett

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I stand up for all students, staff and constituents. I try to reply to all questions or needs within 24 hours. This is a well known fact.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

I can't keep schools open without support staff. Our people are doing important work and need to be treated with respect and dignity. I am always available when staff reach out to me and I maintain confidentiality.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

More full time positions, accountability for those creating unsafe or uncomfortable working conditions.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

I oppose back to work legislation. Collective bargaining needs to be done in a respectful manner.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

We need to hire additional mental health support staff and have them readily available.

Welland

Councillor — ward2

Vince DiMauro

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Data Centres will and are very important for our future. There have been new advancements in reducing water consumption and using renewable energy to power the Centres. It must not result in higher costs for residents.

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

Contracting out at times becomes necessary; it should not be used to replace core services provided by dedicated employees with ties to our communities.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

All districts and communities should be provided equal services and access to a well funded education.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

Public services are very essential to our communities; if elected, protections for Seniors, Children and our most vulnerable will be a priority.

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

Whenever changes are contemplated in the workplace, those affected should be consulted, when possible. A good place to start is during negotiations, with all sides entering discussions with an open mind.

Welland

Mayor

Graham Speck

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

They consume vast quantities of water, generate massive amounts of heat, consume large volumes of electrical power, and have severe noise pollution. On top of that they do not employ many people. Why would anyone want them?

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

My campaign is focused on improving leadership at city hall, and improving corporate culture. I have consistently voted against "farming out" or contracting out services and I have been against using consultants when we should have the capability internally to get the job done.

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

We continually review our Hiring Policies for compliance with provincial legislation regarding those subject matter, and I was formally on the HR committee before our current mayor motioned to dissolve it. Further to that I authored the NOM to create an anti-nepotism policy. This finally passed after 4 years of back and forth with staff. This policy seeks to eliminate favoritism and protect new hires.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

My goal is to have quality, trained, and well equipped staff throughout all of the city departments have the workplace to do their jobs to the best of their ability. We have had 12 years of our current mayor, and 4 different CAOs during my time on council. We need to lead and create a better workplace than the one I am hearing about.

Welland

Municipal

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What are your views on data centres, particularly regarding their water consumption, environmental impact, and energy consumption?

Absolutely negative. No way

What is your position on contracting out or privatizing public services?

I don't view it positively. It would be something that would have to be presented as worthwhile. We've watched our government sell our properties and lose fortunes. One of the reasons I'm proud of well and is we still own our water and hydro

How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I'm not going to pretend I know everything⁸ that's going on. That's a very good question I'm not aware of the internal problems. But my entire focus is having counselors work together to solve problems and not fight each other.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe municipal governments (or school boards) should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

The school boards part has me? Municipal government should definitely have a role in protecting the public. I personally have been running a neighborhood watch group for my area for a couple years now as an effort to create community and Report local crime. I'm currently working on a larger group the encompasses the entire Ward. Win or lose I will be here helping to

CUPE members provide essential services every day. How would you work to ensure frontline workers are respected, consulted, and supported when decisions affecting their workplaces are made?

My wife is a front line worker so I'm 100% And in support of all decisions made to protect them and keep them safe.

West Lincoln

Councillor — Ward 4

Alex Joyner

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How would you promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion within municipal services (or public education) to ensure all residents and students are well served?

I would promote equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion by ensuring students and families have clear pathways to be heard and supported. I would also work to strengthen communication between families, parishes, and the Board so decisions reflect the realities of all communities across West Lincoln, Grimsby, and Lincoln.

Public services are essential to healthy communities. What role do you believe school boards should play in protecting and strengthening public services, and what would be your priorities if elected?

School boards strengthen public services by ensuring that the education system remains safe, accountable, and responsive to the needs of students and families. As a trustee, my priorities would be responsible stewardship of Board resources, supporting strong literacy, numeracy, faith-based, and special-education programs, and ensuring schools remain welcoming and safe for all learners. In addition to supporting the teachers, EAs, and staff who deliver these essential public services every day.

What are your priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools?

My priorities for creating safe and inclusive schools are supporting strong anti-bullying and mental-health initiatives, ensuring every student feels valued, and making sure concerns from families are heard and addressed.

What changes would you advocate for with the Ontario Ministry of Education?

I would advocate for clearer communication and more predictable funding from the Ministry. Boards often struggle with unfunded mandates and rapid curriculum changes, so I would support giving boards more time and resources to implement new policies responsibly. I would also advocate for stable staffing supports for EAs and teachers, and for better alignment between Ministry expectations and the realities faced by schools in our communities.

What should the board do to support student mental health?

The board should support student mental health by ensuring schools have the staffing and resources needed for early intervention, including strong EA and counselling supports. We must also prioritize partnerships with community and parish organizations, and make sure funding is directed toward programs that help students feel connected, supported, and able to learn with confidence.

West Lincoln

Councillor — Ward 2

Edward DUNN

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Data centres

I believe data centres can bring economic opportunities, but we must carefully consider their impact on our water supply, electricity use, and environment. I would want transparency, responsible planning, and assurances that residents and local businesses are not unfairly burdened. Any development must benefit our community while protecting our resources for future generations.

Contracting out public services

I believe public services must remain accountable to the residents who rely on them. I would consider contracting out services on a case-by-case basis, but only if it demonstrates clear cost savings without compromising service quality, accessibility, or fair treatment of workers. Any decision must provide real value to taxpayers and put the best interests of our community first.

Equity, inclusion, and accessibility

I believe every resident deserves to feel welcome, respected, and included in our community. I would promote open communication, listen to the needs of residents from all backgrounds, and work to ensure municipal services are accessible, fair, and available to everyone. I also believe in learning from Indigenous communities, removing barriers for people with disabilities, and making decisions that reflect the needs of our entire community.

Municipal priorities

I believe municipal government plays an important role in ensuring reliable, accessible, and affordable public services. If elected, my priorities would be listening to residents, maintaining essential services, using taxpayer dollars responsibly, and ensuring our roads, infrastructure, recreation, and community services meet the needs of our growing community. I would focus on practical solutions, transparency, and decisions that protect our quality of life today and for future generations.

Frontline workers and union input

I believe frontline workers deserve respect, fair treatment, and a voice in decisions that affect their work. I would encourage open communication with employees and their union representatives, listen to their concerns, and consider their input before making decisions. Supporting the people who provide our essential services helps build a stronger community and ensures residents continue to receive quality services.