



## **RMWB Council Candidate Q&A**

**Galbraith, Bob** - No Contact information available.

**Hollands, Sarah** - No Contact information available.

**MacNeil, Joe** - No response received.

**Wigle, Stu** - No response received.

### **1. Do your strategic priorities for the municipality include supporting equity serving organizations like Wood Buffalo Pride?**

**Bangash, Irfan**

I strongly believe in diversity and inclusion across all aspects of our community. My strategic priorities include uplifting underrepresented groups and supporting those most at risk of discrimination or violence.

Equity-serving organizations like Wood Buffalo Pride play a vital role in shaping a healthy, inclusive, and diverse municipality. Supporting these organizations is a key part of my vision. This means ensuring access to funding, resources, and meaningful opportunities for collaboration for continuing advocating, educating, and creating safe spaces for all residents, especially those who have been historically sidelined.

**Brandt, Ty**

I believe a strong community supports everyone. Organizations like Wood Buffalo Pride are essential to this. I'll advocate for a transparent and equitable grant process for all community groups, ensuring they have the resources they need to continue their important work. My goal is to ensure the municipality is a genuine partner to these groups.

**Banjoko, Funky**

I am a minority (obviously Black lol) and have experienced firsthand, racism and marginalization myself. We might be different in different ways, I however believe all humans must be treated with dignity and I support all organizations serving minorities.

**Dyer, Koryn**

Yes. These organizations often support people who are struggling or feel excluded. They step in where government services sometimes fall short. The municipality should not only provide stable funding but also build real partnerships by including them in planning, events, and regular communication. When groups like Wood Buffalo Pride are supported, our whole region becomes stronger and more welcoming.

**Grandison, Allan**



I will always advocate for any organization that represents our citizens in ensuring equitable treatment and care at all times. Part of my motivation in having the CIP program revamped was to ensure organizations that are achieving their outcomes and doing the "boots on the ground" work were supported in a fair and equitable way.

**Kindopp, Christine**

Absolutely. Supporting equity-serving organizations like Wood Buffalo Pride is an important part of my vision for our municipality. I believe our community is stronger when we celebrate diversity and create space where everyone feels safe, respected, and valued. No matter your gender or sexual orientation, you deserve the freedom to live as your true self and to be proud of who you are. I will always stand beside those who choose to celebrate their identity and ensure they have a welcoming community to celebrate with.

**Moses, Deborah**

Yes I believe in supporting Wood Buffalo Pride as the organization has made key contributions in raising awareness and understanding of 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in the community.

**Phillips, Clyde**

Yes, my municipal priorities explicitly include supporting equity-serving organizations—Wood Buffalo Pride foremost among them—provided that every dollar and every partnership is tied to community-wide safety and the unshakeable principle that all law-abiding residents are treated as absolute equals. Equity ends the moment any group—Pride-affiliated or otherwise—steps outside the law, and I will never hesitate to call that out.

**Sabovitch, Jared**

Yes, supporting Wood Buffalo Pride and organizations like it is without question one of my priorities. Groups like yours are essential and provide representation that strengthens our community, and I believe the municipality should recognize it and back your work.

**Scott, Don**

Yes. My strategic priorities have always included supporting initiatives that strengthen community connections and ensure everyone feels welcome in Wood Buffalo. My law firm was proud to sponsor one of the first regional Pride celebrations because I believe in showing respect and acceptance for all individuals. I will continue to support organizations that work to create safe and inclusive spaces, because our community is stronger when we stand together.

**Tebo, Nixon**

My operating philosophy is to listen to the people and understand their needs and work to gather with them to determine the best way to satisfy those needs. The people's involvement in a solution is very important and I will fight for the municipality to include Equity Serving Organizations in their strategic plan.



**Uche-Ezeala, IJ**

One of my many strategic priorities for RMWB, as I run for this esteemed office as a city Councilor, is to ensure I represent the best interests of all the residents, support ideas that foster engagement, strengthen social cohesion, promote fairness, and achieve goals that positively contribute to the overall well-being of our municipality. Organizations like Wood Buffalo Pride, I believe, are dedicated to enhancing the community's well-being and growth; therefore, I would ensure, RMWB Pride is treated with respect, fairness, and compassion.

**Vardy, Jennifer**

Absolutely. Organizations like Wood Buffalo Pride are essential to building a region where everyone feels valued, respected, and represented. Throughout my career, I have volunteered with and advocated for many organizations that uplift marginalized voices, and this will continue once I am elected. I've worked alongside Pride YMM, earning their Advocacy Award, and I understand the importance of municipal collaboration with grassroots groups. As a councillor, I will champion municipal policies and partnership opportunities that help equity-serving organizations thrive and expand their reach.



## **2. How will you ensure the municipality continues to serve underrepresented communities within the municipality?**

### **Bangash, Irfan**

It is my personal belief that every individual is a creation of God, and therefore every person is valued and loved. Ensuring meaningful representation of underrepresented communities requires both proactive engagement and accountability. I would advocate for:

- Sustained and expanded partnerships with equality focused organizations, ensuring their expertise informs municipal decision-making
- Inclusive policy development incorporates direct input from the communities most affected by municipal decisions
- Strengthened advisory councils and community consultations so that diverse voices are not only heard but also reflected in tangible outcomes
- Regular equity audits to evaluate whether services, programs, and policies genuinely reflect the lived realities and needs of all residents

These steps are essential to building a more equitable, inclusive, and responsive municipality for everyone who calls Wood Buffalo home. I firmly believe that our municipality should not only serve but also empower underrepresented communities to thrive.

### **Brandt, Ty**

My commitment is to listen and learn. I'll make sure we actively engage with underrepresented communities, going beyond traditional meetings to hear their voices directly. We need to review our municipal services to remove barriers and ensure they are accessible and welcoming to everyone.

### **Banjoko, Funky**

I will continue to speak up for underrepresented communities, I will support inclusive policies and make myself available for dialogue if needed.

### **Dyer, Koryn**

I support the work of the RACIDE committee, but I also think we need to improve how committees work and how people stay informed. Right now, there's no easy way for residents to get updates or follow what these groups are doing. I want to fix that by setting up ward-based community liaisons, opt-in newsletters, and better ways to follow committee work and share feedback.

I also think we need to reach people where they already are, not just expect them to come to us. That means having conversations in community halls, schools, places of worship, and local events. Real representation comes from trust, accessibility, and meeting people in spaces



where they feel comfortable speaking up. For instance, with the community for people with disabilities it is important for us to go to them as much as possible.

**Grandison, Allan**

By strongly advocating for those organizations through multiple forums including policy development and service delivery options.

**Kindopp, Christine**

I believe every person in our community deserves to feel seen, heard, and valued. I want underrepresented communities in the RMWB to have the space, support, and resources they need to share their cultures, celebrate their identities, and have their voices included in every conversation. Whether it's standing beside them at a celebration, learning from their experiences, or helping create opportunities to bring people together, I'll always work to make sure no one in our community feels left behind.

**Moses, Deborah**

I would suggest having a round table with organizations so needs and concerns can be discussed and what needs to be done going forward.

**Phillips, Clyde**

1. Data-Driven Funding: I will push council to direct staff to publish line-by-line spending on outreach and equity programs every quarter. If money isn't reaching the street, we cut the grant or re-write the contract.
2. Single-Point Access Hubs: Duplicate "community liaisons" waste cash. I'll consolidate all equity outreach through a one-stop Kiosk at MacDonald Island that any resident—Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, newcomer, or long-time Albertan—can walk into without red tape.
3. Language of Accountability: Grants must contain mandatory performance clauses. If any organization can't show measurable crime reduction or service uptake, the tap shuts off. No exceptions.

**Sabovitch, Jared**

I will work to ensure council decisions reflect the full diversity of our region. That means actively consulting with organizations like Wood Buffalo Pride, listening to underrepresented voices, and making sure resources are distributed in ways that promote equity and inclusion. I also believe in being a boots-on-the-ground type of councillor. Showing up in person, hearing directly from residents, and seeing issues first hand before speaking on their behalf.

**Scott, Don**

I believe every resident should have fair and respectful access to municipal programs, services, and opportunities. This means listening to underrepresented communities, understanding their needs, and ensuring they are reflected in municipal



decision-making. While people in our region come from many different backgrounds and hold diverse beliefs, respect for each other must remain at the foundation of how we live and work together.

**Tebo, Nixon**

As a member of the visible minority myself, I understand some of the problems faced by underrepresented communities. They often feel voiceless, hopeless, and completely left out. The municipal planning should include meeting the needs of unrepresented communities with a budget allocated for that. Either the Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo be reinforced or a new permanent service center be created to cater for unrepresented communities. No community should be left out or feel voiceless.

**Uche-Ezeala, IJ**

We are stronger together; no one is left behind! That is my mantra. My approach to civic engagement is grounded in the truth of my beliefs - first, we are all human beings; everyone should be treated fairly and given equal access to municipal services. I will promote ongoing, productive engagement and make sure the municipality supports its most vulnerable residents. Our municipality is home to families from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs; therefore, to continue growing in a community where diversity is valued, every resident - including the underrepresented - should have the opportunity to thrive.

**Vardy, Jennifer**

Serving underrepresented communities begins with listening directly, consistently, and with respect. I will work to strengthen engagement by meeting people where they are, whether that's through community events, targeted outreach, or accessible consultation processes. I believe in removing barriers to participation, such as transportation challenges, creating safe spaces, language accessibility, and lack of childcare during engagement sessions. I will also champion data-informed and fact-based decision-making so that we can identify gaps in service delivery and direct resources where they are needed most. My goal is to make sure that every resident, regardless of our differences, knows I will listen to them and work to ensure they see themselves reflected in our municipality's priorities and policies.



### **3. Hate crimes are on the rise in the country and province, what will you do within the municipality to promote community safety and a welcoming environment for the people of Wood Buffalo?**

#### **Bangash, Irfan**

Every resident deserves to feel safe and valued in our community. Hate crimes are deeply concerning, and they threaten the very fabric of a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community. To promote safety and create a more welcoming environment for all, especially those most at risk of discrimination or violence, I would work to:

- Support public education campaigns aimed at countering hate and promoting acceptance, in partnership with organizations like Wood Buffalo Pride
- Advocate for community led initiatives that foster dialogue and connection across different cultures, identities, and lived experiences.
- Encourage regular training for municipal staff, bylaw officers, and first responders focused on equity, cultural sensitivity, inclusion, and de-escalation practices.
- Promote transparent, data-driven collaboration between the municipality, community groups, and law enforcement to identify, track, and address hate crimes and bias-related incidents effectively.

My vision is to ensure that everyone in Wood Buffalo feels safe, respected, and proud to call this municipality their home. Hate has no place here!

#### **Brandt, Ty**

Community safety goes beyond law enforcement. It's about creating a place where everyone feels respected and secure. I'll work with our police to make sure they have the resources to address hate crimes effectively, and I'll champion community-building events that celebrate our diverse cultures. When people feel connected and valued, our entire community becomes a safer place.

#### **Banjoko, Funky**

I have been working on getting organizations to make their stand known just like Oilsands is known for safety. I will push for clear signage and education for all. I am open to copy other municipalities that might be doing better than RMWB. We must collectively stand against hate crime. No one is superior to the other, we are equal before the law (and before God).

#### **Dyer, Koryn**

Cultural sensitivity and inclusion training has already been offered to municipal staff, and I believe that needs to continue and grow. Training should be regular and available to all departments, especially those that work directly with the public. I also support stronger systems for reporting discrimination, more public education, and making sure our community spaces visibly reflect inclusion. Everyone should feel safe and welcome here.



I reached out to our local police detachment and have not received a response regarding current statistics. We need more transparency from the RCMP. The public deserves clear and consistent reporting around hate crimes, missing persons, and MMIWG2S+ cases. Right now, the statistics we see are vague or inconsistent, and that makes it harder for people to trust the system or understand what we are truly facing. We cannot keep our heads in the sand. The only way to respond properly is to first be honest about the scope of the problem.

### **Grandison, Allan**

In my last term, Council increased both RCMP officers and Bylaw officers. We established bicycle patrols in the summer and have endeavored to increase Police presence in high-risk areas. We also purchased and trained drone operators which have been tremendously beneficial in our pursuit of offenders who have historically eluded the police. I believe hate crimes are also caused by ignorance and lack of understanding. Supporting programs that educate and inform the public are equally key in increasing safety. My efforts will continue in this term, if elected.

### **Kindopp, Christine**

Hate has no place in Wood Buffalo. Everyone no matter who they are deserves to feel safe, respected, and at home here. I will fight to ensure our most vulnerable are protected through strong funding, community programs, and education that builds understanding instead of division. I will stand shoulder to shoulder with our first responders, giving them the tools and support they need to protect us all. Safety isn't just about law and order, it's about creating a community where kindness is the standard, diversity is celebrated, and no one has to live in fear. Together, we will build a Wood Buffalo where everyone belongs.

### **Moses, Deborah**

The rise in hate crimes in the country and province is concerning. Mayor and Council's direct consultation with provincial leaders and the police force will ensure steps are in place to deal with hate crimes. I will support organizations and businesses that bring a sense of community and strengthening bonds of safety and welcoming of community members.

### **Phillips, Clyde**

1. Enhanced Policing Partnerships: I will expand the current photo-radar pilot into a full municipal crime-analytics contract with the RCMP. Real-time heat-maps will route patrols where hate graffiti, assault, or vandalism spikes—no politics, pure data.
2. Hate-Crime Prosecution Fund: I will table a motion to set aside a dedicated legal-services budget—\$150 k per year frozen for Crown prosecutors to fast-track hate-crime files. Swift court action deters copycats.
3. Zero-Tolerance Child-Protection Protocol: Any organization, pride or otherwise, found sanctioning or concealing grooming, child-endangerment, or pornographic materials will





have their municipal agreement rescinded within 48 hours and be referred to the RCMP Major Crimes unit. Adults keep their freedoms; children keep their innocence—period.

4. Public Safety Ambassadors: Fund a joint program with local churches, mosques, and Pride to train visible “Safety Ambassadors” who walk key venues (downtown, transit hubs, hockey arenas). Amnesty International did it in Toronto; rural Alberta can do it better.
5. Transparency Blitz: I will live-stream every hate-crime statistic monthly. Citizens deserve to see whether numbers rise, fall, or stay flat after each policy tweak.

#### Bottom Line

Equity, inclusion, and safety are not mutually exclusive—they are sequentially linked. My council seat will deliver clear metrics, zero ideology, and absolute intolerance for any crime—especially those that target a person’s identity or endanger a child.

#### **Sabovitch, Jared**

Everyone deserves to feel safe and welcome in Wood Buffalo. I would advocate for stronger partnerships between community organizations, law enforcement, and the municipality to address hate crimes and promote education, awareness, and preventative measures. A welcoming environment doesn’t happen by accident! It takes ongoing effort and leadership. We also need to host community events that spread awareness while bringing people together. Hockey, golf, curling, or even a mini-marathon from Draper Road through town finishing at Mac Island. It’s these kinds of events that help build connection, start conversations, and make Wood Buffalo a community people talk about for the right reasons.

#### **Scott, Don**

No one should feel unsafe or unwelcome in our community. I will work to ensure the municipality partners with law enforcement, community organizations, and residents to promote safety, understanding, and mutual respect. We may not all share the same perspectives, but we can all agree on treating each other with dignity. By leading with respect and finding common ground, we can make Wood Buffalo a place where everyone feels they belong.

#### **Tebo, Nixon**

This is a very important question especially at this moment when hate crimes are on the rise. An all-inclusive society, full representation, with equal opportunities for all, will be ideal for curbing hate crimes. Any form of discrimination should be faced with serious consequences while promoting the beauty of diversity everywhere within our municipality. Every corporate or public workplace or organizations, should be fully diversified. The municipal audit plan should include Auditing for Diversity. We should live diversity in spirit and not just to say it. I will advocate for more community policing while we remain the most welcoming and caring region in Canada.



I have lived these problems and continue to see them everyday which is why I was thinking of running for office. I understand that these problems left unsolved, only take the society backwards

**Uche-Ezeala, IJ**

The safety and well-being of all residents is a priority for me. Within the municipality, I will work to strengthen community safety by supporting educational and awareness initiatives and encouraging respectful dialogue. I will also continue to work with local law enforcement, schools, and community partners to ensure that incidents of hate are taken seriously, Victims are supported, and programs are promoted that foster mutual respect, promote safety, and create a welcoming environment for everyone in Wood Buffalo.

**Vardy, Jennifer**

Community safety isn't just about policing; it's about creating an environment where respect, inclusion, and belonging are the norm. I firmly believe that our societal standard of how we treat others is set by our elected officials and the policies they create.

I have a strong track record of working with diverse partners to address safety, from collaborating with RCMP on community engagement sessions to advocating for cultural education programs that break down barriers between communities. I have organized events that celebrate diversity, from cultural showcases to public awareness campaigns, and have been trusted to represent Indigenous and equity-serving perspectives at regional and provincial tables. As a councillor, I will continue to advocate for strong partnerships between the municipality, the RCMP, schools, non-profits, and cultural organizations to address hate and discrimination proactively. I will continue to be a steadfast advocate for our diverse community and will loudly oppose any municipal, provincial or federal legislation that promotes discrimination.



**Rene Wells**

Provided the following response to our questions:

I am one who believes that actions speak volumes on who I am and what I stand for. As a police officer for three decades in many communities across Alberta and the Northwest Territories, I have upheld and followed through on my original commitment to impartially perform my duties by maintaining the rights of all Canadians, regardless of their background, *"without fear, favour, or affection."*

Since leaving the RCMP, I have sought to generously give back all that I have received in my life by volunteering my time on various boards and committees. This includes serving as a board member of the Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo, supporting its mission to advocate the *"integration of diverse perspectives to ensure meaningful representation in all levels of community life."*

I have long held that the measure of any society is their treatment of the most vulnerable among them and how they support their ability to succeed. Among my priorities as a Council candidate is *"protecting people, properties, and municipal infrastructure."* My time in policing taught me long ago that if people do not feel safe, then nothing else matters. As a member of Council, I will ensure that Administration has the tools they need to carry out their responsibilities, including the protection of people.

Personally, I look at the content of one's character, their integrity, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and their overall behavior as they interact with others. By those standards, I am very proud of the progress our country has made over the last forty years, striving to ensure that all Canadians can live in a country free of discrimination. Locally, that includes the Municipality's support of the Workplace Inclusion Charter. I want to see that continue.

These are the values that I will bring with me if the constituents of Ward 1 elect me to serve as their representative on Council this fall.