

Wood Buffalo and District Labour Council

2025 Municipal Candidate Survey

Introduction

The Wood Buffalo and District Labour Council (WBDLC) represents unionized workers across our region. We advocate for strong public services, local job creation, and a more equitable economy. We're asking candidates to respond to the following questions to help workers and their families understand your positions ahead of the 2025 municipal election.

Section 1: Your Perspective and Priorities

1. Why are you running for council in 2025, and what motivates you to serve this community?

I am running for council because our region deserves experienced, accountable, and community-driven leadership. With over a decade of experience in senior leadership, I have developed expertise in government relations, strategic planning, and policy development, while working closely with non-profits and our Indigenous and rural communities. As a Mom of two school-aged children and a wife of a local business owner, I understand firsthand the challenges and opportunities facing families in the Wood Buffalo region. My motivation stems from spending years working alongside elected officials and saying, "If I were in that role, I would do it differently."

2. What do you see as the most urgent challenges facing Fort McMurray today?

Every facet of our region has urgent challenges. I based my three campaign priorities on the crux of what is causing some of our most urgent challenges: a need for leadership experience, strategic infrastructure development, and responsible investment.

We face numerous challenges, and it is difficult to identify which are more urgent than others. This is why I have focused on broad guidelines to solve problems, rather than singular issues. Having those three pillars will help remove barriers that are causing the number of robust challenges in our region.

3. What are your top two priorities for strengthening the local economy in a way that benefits workers and their families, not just corporations?

As an advocate for local procurement/Indigenous procurement for many years, hiring local is one of the best ways to strengthen our economy. As former Vice Chair of the Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee, supporting local procurement, and specifically developing an Indigenous Procurement Policy, is a project I am deeply involved in. Due to the restrictions via our trade agreements, hiring locals isn't a simple solution. I have been researching and collaborating with the RMWB procurement team to gain a deeper understanding of trade agreements and develop policies that support local hiring. I will advocate for criteria within the RFP that prioritize local contractors, Indigenous businesses, and hire local labour so that the jobs created by municipal spending go directly to the people who live and work here. The benefits of hiring local, beyond the immediate benefit to the business owner/corporation, directly impact our workers and their families. Local companies are the first to support events, sports teams, fundraisers, and other community initiatives. People who live in this region will reinvest in it, and this reinvestment benefits all in one way or another.

Economic diversification is crucial not only for strengthening our local economy but also for ensuring the longevity of our region. One aspect of the region's history, successes and global recognition has been due to Oil and Gas, but I believe we have more to offer than just that. Our region's economy is heavily reliant on industry, and we need to work strategically to create a resilient and diverse economy with good-paying, stable jobs. Indigenous tourism and green energy initiatives are just a few ideas that could complement the work our region is known for.

Section 2: Local Jobs and Economic Recovery

4. The fly in fly out workforce continues to undermine Fort McMurray's long-term growth by reducing local job opportunities, weakening housing demand, and limiting community involvement. What is your plan to reduce dependence on fly in fly out and encourage more permanent residency and community building?

I am strongly opposed to a fly-in, fly-out workforce. With our investment in new housing development and our investment in arts, culture and recreation over the past decade, our region has become a great place to work, live and raise a family. I will continue to support Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism, and the work they do. They have done a fantastic job at expanding the narrative of what our region has to offer, and they have created new opportunities for new developments, businesses and potential workers. One critical piece of encouraging people to move to and stay in our area is that we have an active advocate who captures not only the potential, but the beauty of our region.

In addition to the solutions I highlighted in previous answers regarding diversification and hiring locally, I will also advocate for collaborative solutions with unions, Keyano College, and industry leaders, because the municipality cannot solve this problem alone. Expanding apprenticeships and post-secondary programs at Keyano to train local people in specialized positions and providing tax incentives for companies to transition a percentage of their workforce to permanent residency are two examples of avenues to explore.

5. Fort McMurray International Airport has seen a decline in reliability and economic impact due to operational issues like limited runway maintenance and staffing delays. These disruptions have pushed many residents to travel to Edmonton instead. What steps will you take to improve airport operations and restore its role as a key regional hub?

When discussing diversification, I must mention how the Fort McMurray International Airport has diversified and become a strong community hub, which will soon contribute to additional economic growth through a shopping development.

Since the airport is controlled by the airport authority and not the municipality, there are few direct actions I can recommend, as the council has little control. However, advocacy and understanding of policy play a considerable role here. Our councils need to have a strong working relationship with both the provincial and federal governments to ensure appropriate and timely maintenance and infrastructure development.

I am currently researching the restriction of airports on worksites in the region. That would then direct all air traffic through the Fort McMurray International Airport.

I wholeheartedly believe that elected representatives should be our most vocal advocates. If we want the community to utilize the airport, we need to be seen utilizing and advocating for the airport. In addition to my answer above, I have included a post I made about the airport a few weeks ago. It is an example of ensuring our representatives advocate for what matters, not just during times of crisis, but always.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/12LnWZuuBPp/>

Section 3: Public Services and Municipal Jobs

6. In 2024, the municipality began reviewing whether to contract out services such as fleet operations, custodial work, solid waste, and trades. Many candidates say they oppose privatization, but are you prepared to stand up to the administration and actively defend public delivery of these services to protect good local jobs?

I have a demonstrated and well-documented history of consistently standing up for our workers. Once on the council, that will not change, I will then have additional avenues to help make an impactful change.

Contracting out services like fleet operations, custodial work, solid waste, and trades may look like a short-term cost saving on paper, but it often comes at the expense of workers' job security, service quality, and long-term accountability. We are already seeing this in real time via the hired third-party contractors from out of town, at both the municipal and provincial levels. Companies are hired from out of town, provide the service, but then do not have to live with the final result. I believe municipal services are strongest when they are delivered by a stable, well-trained local workforce that understands our community and reinvests their paycheques here.

When I talk about cost savings and responsible spending, it is not at the expense of our local workforce.

There are times when having external but connected companies to fulfill the role of the municipality makes sense. The Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism and the Regional Recreational Corporation are examples of initiatives that are technically outside of the city that were created to serve the municipal purpose. However, they are located in town, with locally hired people. I would not support these initiatives if they were contracted outside the region.

7. Would you support bringing any currently contracted services back in house? If so, which ones and why? Will you commit to reviewing the true cost of contracted services versus in-house delivery, and advocate for proper staffing to reduce excessive spending — including the legal costs that come from short staffing and excessive discipline that leads to arbitration?

I cannot speak to past contracted-out services at this time. I need to research which services are contracted out and review their RFQ/RFP's. I will commit to researching and providing my answer to that aspect of the question to WBDLC before September 22, 2025.

I support having services provided in-house. Many projects and initiatives are best completed in-house to ensure consistency of service and collaboration between departments for success. As I mentioned earlier, in-house employees offer an additional level of care, investment, and a broader understanding of how this project aligns with larger initiatives.

I support and commit to advocating for a third-party review of the true cost of contracted services versus in-house delivery, which would include legal costs, hiring additional staff to cover short staffing, and the cost of redoing sections of projects that require correction. That is essential information for us to make responsible final decisions regarding services and staff.

To be clear, I do not believe that all positions should be in-house; however, with the data provided via the third-party report, we would gain a better understanding of where we can contract out services and where we should have in-house staff, based on facts rather than arbitrary opinions.

To ensure my questionnaire is completed before the deadline given, I will only base my answer on currently available RFQs.

In August 2025, the RMWB posted an RFQ for Commercial Diving Services. That is an appropriate use of contracted-out services, as we do not require a full-time team to manage marine infrastructure or maintenance.

8. Fort McMurray continues to experience high unemployment among youth, workers, and residents who have chosen to make this community their home. What is your plan to create meaningful employment opportunities that help people stay and thrive here?

To summarize my points mentioned in the above answers, I plan to work with the council to prioritize local hiring, update local/indigenous procurement policies, and collaborate with Keyano and unions to expand training and apprenticeship opportunities, as well as advocate for economic diversification.

My goal is to help create a region where people not only have to call home but actually want to call home. They live here and move here because we have more than work, but also because we have opportunities. We offer opportunities for entrepreneurs looking to start a business, for families seeking quality school and recreation programs, for outdoor enthusiasts eager to explore our robust forests, and for seniors who want to stay close to their kids and grandkids while maintaining an active social life. Those are my goals for meaningful opportunities for both employment and quality of life.