

Electoral Audit of the Six 2010 Mayoral
Candidates for City of Lethbridge, Alberta,
Canada



Electoral Audit Completed by the Foundation for
Democratic Advancement (October, 2010)

Purpose: Determine a ranking and grades for the six 2010 mayoral candidates for the City of Lethbridge, in terms of the better representative of the citizens of Lethbridge as a whole.

This non-partisan, independent determination is a perspective to give the citizens of the City of Lethbridge an informed, objective perspective of the 2010 Lethbridge mayoral candidates

The views and results in this electoral audit are the opinions and findings of the Foundation for Democratic Advancement (FDA). Also, the electoral audit is an example of a way to inform the public in their selection of political representatives—through electoral audits. Moreover, the audit is a way to hold political candidates and representatives further accountable and improve the democratic system through putting emphasis on substance/ideas.

The 2010 six Lethbridge mayoral candidates are as follows:

Kay Adeniyi

Denis Carrier

Rajko Dodic

James Frey

Cheryl Meheden

Chris Spearman

The FDA and its members and volunteers are in no way affiliated with any of the candidates in this audit. The FDA's assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors in the calculation of its audit results or inaccuracies in its research of the candidates. The citizens of Lethbridge will decide themselves who is the new mayor of Lethbridge.

The audit represents an independent assessment of the six Lethbridge mayoral candidates based on objectivity, transparency, and non-partisanship.

Methodology for the audit of the Lethbridge mayoral candidates:

Section 1:

Establish the criteria for the mayor position. Leadership was identified as a key competency, as defined by ability to identify issues and act on them, vision, strength to carry through, independent yet team player, and strong communication with peers and public. Moreover, business and communication skills were also identified as essential to the mayor position.

Section 2:

Identify the basic priorities of the citizens of Lethbridge as a whole for its municipal government. Use those basic priorities to assist in the audit of the mayoral candidates. (The FDA relied on its own survey of the Lethbridge public, and other local survey's.)

Basic priorities of the citizens of Lethbridge:

1. Taxes
2. Public transit
3. Accountability of elected officials
4. Miscellaneous policies

Section 3:

Backgrounds of the mayoral candidates. Evaluate the candidates' political, professional, and volunteer/extracurricular backgrounds, based on their relevance to leading the Lethbridge City Council and the City as a whole.

Section 4:

Vision of the mayoral candidates. Evaluate the candidates' visions based on their relevance to the public's basic priorities and overall scope in terms of the short-term and long-term future of the City of Lethbridge.

Section 5:

Incumbency record of the mayoral candidate (if relevant). Evaluate the candidate's incumbency record based on performance in terms of policies, responses to citizen's changing needs and circumstances, and the candidate's overall leadership ability.

Section 6:

Evaluate the key policies of the mayoral candidates based on the basic priorities of the citizens of Lethbridge as a whole.

The key policies to be evaluated are as follows:

City taxes: (Evaluation criteria: soundness and comprehensiveness of fiscal plan regarding City taxes)

Public transit: (Evaluation criteria: improved public transit through expansion, frequency, and quality of service)

Accountability of elected officials: (Evaluation criteria: soundness and comprehensiveness of measures to hold elected officials accountable.)

Miscellaneous policies: (Evaluation criteria: degree to which the policies add or detract from the better interest of the Lethbridge public as a whole.)

Weighting and scoring:

The categories for backgrounds, visions, incumbency, and each policy section will have a score range of 0 out of 10. The miscellaneous policy section will receive an overall score of 0 out of 10.

Hence, the policy category will have the greater weight in the audit.

The background section will be divided in three scores of 0 out of 10 for political, professional, volunteer experience, but the overall score will be combined to 0 out of 10.

Electoral auditors will do their own scoring, and then share the results with each other, and make any adjustments to the scores. The purpose of approach is to minimize the noise in a group dynamic.

As mentioned, the assigned scores for each category will be based on the combination of the individual scores of the electoral audit team. The scores of members of the audit team have equal weight. All scores must be based on stated and documented reasons and soundness. The Chief Electoral Auditor has the right to question the reasons and their soundness by members of the audit team. Members of the audit have the right to raise concerns with the rational for scores by other members. The Chief Electoral Auditor has the final say in areas of disagreement, and may remove scores of a member if the rational is unsound.

FDA Electoral Audit Team:

Chief Electoral Auditor:

Mr. Stephen Garvey, Founder and Executive Director of the FDA (BA, MA)

Electoral Auditors:

Mr. Franklin Nyiawung (BSc, MSc)

Mr. Kevin Lemieux (Hons. Political Science BA)

Mr. Asongafeh Ndobegang (MA International Politics)

Observer:

Mr. Kenneth Xu (BA, Chinese political experience)

Surveyor:

Ms. Courtney Killam (4th year University of Lethbridge)

Information sources:

Media articles and analysis of mayoral candidates.

Candidates' policy statements, including policy promises, and visions. The FDA attended the September 29th All Candidates Forum at the Lethbridge Public Library, and met all the candidates.

The FDA questioned mayoral candidates about various policy, vision, and background issues on a need basis.

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Background of Candidates

Kay Adeniyi

first non-white person to run for mayor in Lethbridge, and the youngest candidate in the 2010 election

Age: 22

Employment: Entrepreneur

He works three jobs, runs a small business, and also volunteers his free time to the homeless shelter. He also prides himself in bringing the community together through events he runs annually.

Denis Carrier

Born and raised in Lethbridge

Self-made successful and respected businessman

Keen sense of business and financial responsibilities with a strong analytical and versatile approach to solving problems and maximizing resources

Family man—married 30 years with 4 children

Accomplishments:

Political appointment to the Provincial Manpower Board

Longtime association with the Lethbridge Construction Association

Member and past President of the Kinsmen Club

Political appointment to the Senate of the University of Lethbridge

Major fund raiser for the Lethbridge Therapeutic riding annual auction

President of the Lethbridge municipal railway association

Coordinated the restoration of the Lethbridge Streetcar #8 as well as the publishing of a book documenting this effort.

Rajko Dodic (information from the Lethbridge Herald)

2 terms as Lethbridge Alderman

Longtime Lethbridge citizen

BA in Arts and science degree

Law degree in UofA

Law practice... experience in municipal law from working with a number of municipalities

Age 50

FDA Comments:

Very well educated

Municipal law experience and legal background asset to City Council

Experience as political representative

James Frey

Political experience:

2009-2010 vice-president / spokesperson Citizens for Better Governance (Lethbridge watch-dog organization)

2001 to 2009 Government of Alberta, regional communications manager (various departments)

1993 and 1997 communications director for MLA Ken Nicol election campaigns (Lethbridge East)

Professional experience

2010 education and outreach coordinator Lethbridge Family Services – Immigrant Services

2010 owner Corporatetorytelling.ca (communications and social media market consulting firm)

2001 to 2009 Government of Alberta, regional communications manager (various departments)

1990 to 2001 Lethbridge Community College, media and communications coordinator

Political Science major / Psychology minor from the University of Calgary.

Began working at age 15, in retail, food services, outside sales, and even two-years toward electrical apprenticeship.

Volunteer

2008-2010 Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce board of directors

2008-2010 St. Mary's elementary school parent council

2010 Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce Alberta Chamber's AGM planning committee

2006-2010 Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce communications committee

2009-2010 Steps for Life campaign committee

2009 23 Days of Christmas planning committee (in support of Meals on Wheels)

2006-2009 Southern Alberta NAOSH committee

Cheryl Meheden

an educator and businessperson, and she is the first female to run since 1992.

Age: 45

Employment: Educator and Management Consultant

Long time Lethbridge citizen Cheryl Meheden (formerly Pollmuller) will be seeking the Mayor's seat in the 2010 civic election. Cheryl has a skill set that fits well with city governance, having served in a leadership capacity on several community boards including the University of

Lethbridge Senate, Lethbridge College Board of Governors, Economic Development Lethbridge, and numerous non-profit boards.

Cheryl is well educated in both theory and practice. Academically she is a PhD candidate in Education with a concentration on leadership, has completed graduate education in business, and undergraduate education in both business and humanities. Cheryl is a graduate of the University of Lethbridge, Athabasca University, and Heriot Watt University. She is a member of both Phi Theta Kappa international honours society and Phi Delta Kappa international education honours society.

Cheryl understands that hard work reaps rewards. She owned a successful small businesses that doubled its revenues for five consecutive years. While employed at Lethbridge College, Cheryl served as Chair for the School of Business and championed several projects, including working tirelessly on an international exchange program in China that saw over 200 students enrol in the first year. Currently Cheryl serves in an academic role in the Faculty of Management at the University of Lethbridge.

Service is a hallmark of Cheryl's existence. She gives generously to her community through volunteerism and commitments to social projects. She understands the balance between social and economic needs, serving as a facilitator and keynote speaker at Junior Achievement Stay in School programs and World of Choices conference. She walks the talk and has opened her home to shelter young girls in need, part of a YWCA program.

Cheryl's strength as a leader lies in her ability to understand the broad perspectives and implications of issues. She tackles challenges with a positive can-do attitude, actively engaging the help of others and drawing the polarized positions of stakeholders closer to centre. Cheryl feels these are critical leadership skills in the current political climate.

Cheryl loves living in the city of Lethbridge and feels there are many benefits and first-class services here. She is a supporter of city activities and services, frequently using services such as the public library and public transit as her mode of transportation to get to work. Cheryl has stated that strong leadership is critical for cities to move forward. There are many challenges ahead and Cheryl is capable of generating the enthusiasm and support necessary to move people towards positive goals.

My employment background includes public service (federal gov't), private sector (retail, hospitality, construction), not-for-profit (Red Cross, Settlement Services, Group Homes), and self-employment (employment agency). These are a lot of experiences but I had my first job at age 14 and have held a full time job since I was 16 – that's 31 years of employment opportunity.

My educational background includes degrees in humanities and management (BSc., Mgt), post-graduate education in business (MBA), and doctoral work in leadership (PhD). I have also been trained/certified in a number of other areas including arbitration & mediation, project management, and post-secondary instructional certification.

My extracurricular experiences include logging thousands of hours as a volunteer in many capacities. These have included chairing committees, serving on boards, participating in events, fundraising, and so on. I have adopted a broad approach to my community commitments, including serving as a member of the University Senate, Chairing the Mission & Social Action committee at McKillop Church, helping the FASD youth group, and so on. I have pulled back from some of my volunteer work and presently only it on the Alumni Association (Chair the Fiat Lux committee), sit on the Economic Development board (Chair the Human Resource committee) and do several one-off events (Galt Museum special events, etc.).

My political experience comes from being on both sides of the table. My board work has allowed me to operate within large public institutions and be involved in decision making at provincial and municipal levels. My work as an advocate has seen me lobbying governments for both services and rights. I am blessed to be a natural leader. It seems that whenever I get involved I am very shortly thereafter asked to chair a committee or the lead the charge on one particular thing or another. I see this as a gift and I take it to be a responsibility for helping and serving others, which is how I also view politics.

Chris Spearman

Major Lethbridge Industry

- Accounting & Administrative Manager since 1980

Industrial Association of Southern Alberta (IASA)

- Founding member (1983)
- Chairman (1995 to 2008)

Economic Development Lethbridge (EDL)

- Board of Directors
- Industry Representative
- Executive Committee Member (2003 – 2007)

Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership (SAAEP)

- Committee member 2007

University of Lethbridge

- Faculty of Management Advisory Board (current)

- AIESEC Advisory Committee (5 years)

Holy Spirit School Board Trustee (18 years)

- Board Chairman (2 years)
- West Lethbridge Centre - Steering Committee
- Audit Committee
- Worked as a team player to oversee development of four new schools (Catholic Central West Lethbridge Campus, St. Patrick's Fine Arts Elementary School, St. Paul's School, St. Mary's School (Taber) and major renovations to Catholic Central High School, Ecole St. Mary's Elementary School, St. Joseph's School (Coaldale) and St. Catharine's School (Picture Butte).

More People in Trades (MPIT)

- Advisory Committee (3 years)

Allied Arts Council

- In the Shadow of the Bridge Committee (2009)

Rehabilitation Society of Southwestern Alberta

- Board of Directors (5 years)

St. Martha's (West Lethbridge)

- Building Fund Committee (5 years)

Utility Rate Issues

- Presentations to City Council as both an industry leader and a concerned citizen.

Action Against High Gas Prices

- Raising concerns when gasoline prices in Lethbridge consistently exceeded prices in other communities.

Electrical Deregulation

- Pointed out the pitfalls prior to its implementation in 2001 to prepare users for imminent changes.

Property Tax Assessment Policies

- Raising concerns about procedures.

Evaluation:

Basis for evaluation: Leadership--identifies issues and act on them, vision, strength to carry through, independent yet team player, and strong communication with public.

Scores:

	Political	Professional	Volunteer/extracurricular
Kay Adeniyi	0/10	5/10	2/10
Denis Carrier	0/10	7/10	7/10
Rajko Dodic	7/10	8/10	7/10
James Frey	0/10	8/10	8/10
Cheryl Meheden	0/10	8/10	8/10
Chris Spearman	8.5/10	8/10	7/10

Rationals:

Kay Adeniyi no elected political experience; limited business experience; limited volunteer experience.

Denis Carrier no elected political experience; strong business experience; strong volunteer experience and in high positions.

Rajko Dodic two terms as alderman; strong professional experience related to the mayor position; various experience through alderman position.

James Frey no elected political experience; strong business experience with provincial exposure; extensive volunteer experience.

Cheryl Meheden no elected political experience; strong business related experience; extensive volunteer, well-rounded experience.

Chris Spearman 18 years as elected school trustee; strong business related experience; various volunteer experience related to trustee work.

Vision for the City of Lethbridge:

Kay Adeniyi

A New Lethbridge
A New Direction for Lethbridge
Make improvements to the City which benefit all citizens
Listen to the people's needs.

Denis Carrier

"I am a builder by trade, so let's get down to the business of building an even better community!"

Rajko Dodic

No vision applicable.

Note Mr. Dodic refused to share information on his policies, vision, and background with the FDA. All other candidates fully cooperated with the FDA's requests for information.

James Frey

The one on your side in City Hall.
My only promise is this: you'll always know what's going on, because I'm on your side.

FDA Comment:

Vision has a negative connotation because it suggests that other political representatives are not on the public's side.

Cheryl Meheden

Ensure Lethbridge continues to be a city that provides excellent quality of life; get things done, positive attitude, one identity for a better Lethbridge;

Chris Spearman

We have an opportunity to renew confidence between citizens and City Council. Chris Spearman will ensure the fiscal responsibility we expect and build a solid foundation of trust at City Hall.

1. Demonstrate that operational spending can be managed prudently.
2. Build confidence in Lethbridge City Council throughout the community.

3. Lobby external funding sources for our major capital priorities.
4. Examine opportunities to reduce our environmental footprint.
5. Act as a champion for our community partners and support them in the achievement of their goals.

FDA note: short-term focus

Evaluation:

Basis for evaluation: Leadership--identifies issues and act on them, vision, strength to carry through, independent yet team player, and strong communication with public.

Scores

Kay Adeniyi	5/10
Denis Carrier	4/10
Rajko Dodic	no score
James Frey	4/10
Cheryl Meheden	4/10
Chris Spearman	5/10

Rationals:

Kay Adeniyi very general.

Denis Carrier narrow, weak; needs better vision.

Rajko Dodic no vision applicable. (no vision identified and no vision provided by Mr. Dodic to the FDA)

James Frey negative, narrow.

Cheryl Meheden one Lethbridge not practical.

Chris Spearman very general.

Policies

Taxes

Kay Adeniyi

“Nobody likes paying taxes. But we hate it less when we’re sure that we’re getting good value for the money that we pay. Many people say that property taxes are too high. I agree that this is often the case. But in order to lower taxes, we have to either increase our income, or make better use of what we already have. Growth and efficiency are cornerstones of my platform.” (Source: Lethbridge Accountability Survey)

Tax incentive for businesses to hire college students
Incentives to college and university students to work in Lethbridge
Reduce taxes through generation and stimulation of local economy
(FDA interview on September 29th)

Denis Carrier

I don't know why our taxes are the second highest in Alberta , but I would like to find out.

Rajko Dodic

“Annually, the City of Edmonton conducts a review of property taxes and utility rates in Alberta and Canada. There are a number of charts of interest in the 2009 report including one titled ‘Average Property Tax for All Single Detached Houses in Canada’ where Lethbridge is ranked the sixth lowest of 20 communities with only Medicine Hat being lower and Calgary , Edmonton, Red Deer and Grande Prairie in Alberta being higher. The fact is that statistics can be used by almost anyone to support whatever position they are advocating. The reality is also that people would like to see taxes either reduced or increases kept at a minimum. This is a challenge I am willing to undertake but I provide a cautionary note that, often times, politicians that advocate lower taxes fail to point out that the level of services may be negatively affected as a result.” (Source: Lethbridge Accountability Survey)

James Frey

Taxes and spending, “we need to bring City hall spending under control, reduce it by 5% and lower taxes and utilities. Lowering taxes will bring more business to the city and more economic development.” (Part of main platform)

I believe property taxes are too high and that the City has moved away from the responsible fiscal management examples set by Mayors Andy Anderson and David Carpenter. Consider this:

- Property taxes, in the last eight years the City of Lethbridge has increased the amount of money raised by taxes by nearly 150 per cent, or almost 20 per cent a year. This is double the inflation and the City's population growth combined. Many citizens tell me their own property taxes have nearly doubled in the last ten years. Business is in the same boat -- it's been found time and again, the best driver for business development is lower taxes!
 - I want a thorough review of all city spending and look for at least a five percent spending reduction!
- Pay-As-You-Go should be spend what you can afford. Funds are held in reserves and used for major projects or unforeseen fluctuations. However, utility administration charges and builders' levies are currently used to fund dozens of hidden cash reserves that are used for "internal borrowing" between departments.
 - We need to adopt spending that seriously considers the taxpayer. Whether its \$3,000 or \$30 million; it's all taxpayer money and deserves equal consideration.
- Operating and capital expenses are being blended, so we don't get a full perspective of the cost of projects or their annual operating needs. Interdepartmental internal borrowing from reserve funds is used to cover operating costs on major projects.
 - We need clearer costing of all projects, capital and operating. The real world doesn't blend the two. why should the city be allowed?
- Provincial grants for infrastructure and community projects are not going to the right things. The \$33.7-million expansion to the Enmax Centre received about \$21.3 million in government grants and \$12.5 million coming directly from property tax dollars (included in that is \$4.5 million in operating expenses added into the cost of the project).
 - We have been spending provincial grants before we actually know how much will receive. That type of estimate financing is like basing you monthly budget on winning at the casino. We need to be more conservative in estimates and we need to have definite contingency plans if the provincial grants do not materialize.
- City Hall SPENDING? EMPLOYEES? has grown by more than 15 percent in three years, while the city's population only grew by eight percent. The City was one of the few organizations to actually increase its workforce when others were laying off. Property taxes have increased at a rate nearly double that of inflation and population growth.
 - We need to look closely at City operations and find out where we can be more efficient. We need to look for gaps and overlaps. Are we doing things we shouldn't be?
- Capital projects: Despite claims that the City has to use provincial and federal grants for Capital Improvement Program projects – the old "use it or lose it" argument -- a large portion of the costs of those capital projects come from property taxes and utility administrative fees paid by you and me

Keeping YOUR money in YOUR pocket is my #1 priority!

Property taxes should be kept at their current rate, or even lowered. No financial decisions, no matter how minor, should be made without that single priority in mind.

The public must be consulted on a regular basis, via social media or other means, to see if the City is spending their tax dollars the way they want them to be spent.

You don't spend money you don't have on luxuries and assume that you can just make more money or go into debt to cover the cost.

Neither should the City of Lethbridge. (Source: Frey Website)

“The middle and working classes are being squeezed at every turn. The amount the City is collecting in property taxes in the last seven years is almost double the annual population and inflation rates combined. Where is the money going? We need to find ways to reduce the tax burden. We must go through the city's budget and find more creative ways of delivering the services we do offer. We also need to eliminate duplication.” (Source: Lethbridge Accountability Survey)

Cheryl Meheden

Concerned with “impact of high utility rates and increased taxes on business investment in the city” (fiscal management: taxes, budgeting, accountability & responsibility for spending) (Part of Main Platform)

Taxes in Lethbridge are high (#5 in country according to survey from City of Edmonton) which should translate into amazing services for Lethbridge citizens. I don't think we make the mark there. Tax increases should follow inflation and the city should be more responsive to economic conditions. I don't see a lot of belt tightening in the past two years.

“A recent survey from the City of Edmonton (who monitors tax and utility rates across the country) has Lethbridge in the #5 spot for highest taxes. I believe we need to pay taxes and that the ability to do so reflects the economic health of a community, but there is also a point of tax being counterproductive to economic development because money earned or available goes towards paying taxes and not purchasing goods or services. I also believe that the amount you pay should be reflected in the services that are provided. Would you say Lethbridge is #5 in community services? The current structure utilizes your tax dollar in ways you may or may not agree with. I suggest an audit of spending that could result in rethinking and redistribution of your tax dollar. Regardless of how this unfolds, it's important to recognize that less tax means less services.” (Source: Lethbridge Accountability Survey)

Chris Spearman

“The concern that I keep hearing from residents is that their taxes seem to be increasing and a faster rate than inflation and wages.” (Source: Lethbridge Accountability Survey)

Evaluation:

Basis for evaluation: sound, fiscal management of public revenue and expenditure, and fair distribution of government expenditure to all sectors of Lethbridge

Scores:

Kay Adeniyi	5/10
Denis Carrier	0/10
Rajko Dodic	4/10
James Frey	7/10
Cheryl Meheden	5/10
Chris Spearman	0/10

Rational:

Kay Adeniyi general; not comprehensive.

Denis Carrier no stated policy.

Rajko Dodic no concrete policy; meandering.

James Frey comprehensive.

Cheryl Meheden not as comprehensive as Frey. Does not take policy position.

Chris Spearman no stated policy.

Public Transit

Kay Adeniyi

Improve transit by having info phone number at every bus stop and a web app for checking schedules with smart phones (*Lethbridge Herald*, 20 June 2010) (Part of Main Platform)

Denis Carrier

Transit system is working, considering the public, senior and handicap service

Rajko Dodic

Transit users are made up , in large measure, by seniors and students. Like other municipalities, the transit services are subsidized in large part by property taxes with approximately 40% of the cost being covered by transit users and 60% by all property tax payers. In addition to the regular transit services provided, the City provides school bussing on a cost recovery basis to the local schools and further offers a service to those that are unable to use regular transit through the Access-A-Ride Program. Efficient transit services is a must for this City and should be properly funded but by the same token efforts must be undertaken to ensure that ridership warrants the level of service provided. (Source: Lethbridge Accountability survey)

James Frey

Transit ridership has increased on some routes (anecdotally, based on discussions with transit drivers). The basic problem is that driving is relatively cheap and it's still more convenient than using transit (in terms of time). Adding more routes or decreasing the wait-times (more buses) increases the costs and does not necessarily increase ridership. Maybe we need some radical ideas – like a free shuttle on Whoop-Up drive between the U of L and downtown. I've proposed some new ideas on transportation on my blog in July: (<http://www.freyformayor.com/2010/07/transportation-in-lethbridge-some-ideas.html>) or offering post-secondary student reduced transit passes. Business offers loss-leaders to increase usage. Maybe we need to get creative in how we market our services.

Cheryl Meheden

Effective public transportation (Part of Main Platform)

I ride the city bus to work and find it to be convenient, but it is expensive (\$5 day). I have other transportation options, but for those folks who rely on the bus, they raise interesting points. Why

is there no bus to the farmer's market? Why is there no bus to free recreational facilities like Helen Schuler? I recognize that transit costs are about 65% to the city and only 35% user pay. It's a vicious circle – more riders are needed to make better service but better service can't be obtained with so few riders. Where do you start? The current transportation survey being undertaken (I received a request to fill out – another contracted service from the city) should provide some insights (I hope).

Chris Spearman

There was extensive consultation two or three years ago to look at new opportunities for service improvements. I am always open to proposals to increase efficiency and utilization.

Evaluation:

Basis for evaluation: improved public transit through expansion and frequency of service

Scores:

Kay Adeniyi	4/10
Denis Carrier	0/10
Rajko Dodic	1/10
James Frey	4/10
Cheryl Meheden	4/10
Chris Spearman	0/10

Rationals:

Kay Adeniyi not comprehensive; good specific ideas; narrow scope.

Denis Carrier no stated policy.

Rajko Dodic no defined, concrete position; understanding of overall transit issues.

James Frey identifies some transit problems

Cheryl Meheden unclear how to deal with issue.

Chris Spearman no stated policy.

Accountability of Elected Officials

Kay Adeniyi

Live broadcast from City Hall

Denis Carrier

All elected officials should be totally open to the public who put them there.

Rajko Dodic

Improve the inclusiveness of the City Hall (Lethbridge Herald)

James Frey

Better communications between the City and citizens, “people need to know what’s going and why. Why council makes the decisions it does and what are the impacts. People need to be part of the decision-making process. It shouldn’t be left up to high-priced consultants.” (Part of his main platform)

Communications: engaging the citizens does not come from spending thousands of dollars on new websites, newsletters, or full-page advertising. All you need to do is talk to people and listen their concerns and seriously consider their ideas. All members of Council need to be the representatives of the citizens. That means they need to talk to the citizens, and not just at election time.

- Getting out of City Hall is critical. The Mayor and aldermen need to be part of the community, not just attend public meetings, but actually get out to where citizens are. Barring that, my open door policy will be to go to the citizens' doors and regularly engage them with open dialogue. I fully agree with [Lee Cutforth](#)'s idea of regular town halls -- we need to actively engage the public, not just wait till they have problems.
- A positive and effective working relationship with the local news media is critical to communicating with the larger public.
- Social media tools like Facebook, Twitter and others are inexpensive and easy to use tools for getting information to citizens.
- Volunteer advisory committees are a low cost way of engaging with the public. For too long we have sought the guidance of expensive outside consultants, its time we start capitalizing on the expertise we have in our community.
- Directly going to the people to get their ideas and opinions through regular surveys. We need to know what issues people are concerned about and the role the City plays. We also need to talk to people regularly, not just to hear when things are working, but when they are working.

Governance: citizens need to be confident knowing that City Council is accountable and truly represents them to administration. There are many possible solutions: a ward system, or setting term lengths for the Mayor and Council. We should establish a joint Council and community panel to look at governance issues and come up with solutions.

Implement a “pay as you go” approach to civic projects

Cheryl Meheden

I think the current council has felt insulated and protected and therefore not accountable to the electorate. Perhaps a reminder to the new council that the structure should be that council takes direction from the citizens and administration takes direction from council would help. Other ideas include more public debate, published voting on matters that come before council, aldermen assigned to specific areas or groups within the city, more community engagement from aldermen (rather than the mayor at everything; instead of the cheerleader mayor I would be less cheer and more leader).

Chris Spearman

Emphasize public service, stand up for people’s rights, make City Hall more transparent, increase trust between the people and City Hall.

Evaluation:

Basis for evaluation: measures to further hold elected officials accountable

Scores:

Kay Adeniyi	6/10
Denis Carrier	3/10
Rajko Dodic	3/10
James Frey	7/10
Cheryl Meheden	5/10
Chris Spearman	3/10

Rationals:

Kay Adeniyi good ideas; narrow scope.

Denis Carrier very vague.

Rajko Dodic very vague of inclusiveness.

James Frey a lot of good ideas.

Cheryl Meheden identifies problems that need to be addressed.

Chris Spearman very general.

Miscellaneous policy issues:

Kay Adeniyi

1. Encourage New Business (Have less red tape for business startups)
2. Bike and pedestrian lanes downtown
3. Provide more affordable housing
4. Provide more summer and post-graduate employment programmes
5. Improve downtown parking issues
6. Create affordable sport and recreational facilities and programmes for young people (and build a youth recreational facility and skate park)
7. Invest in alternative energy sources
8. Westside business expansion
9. Multi development of downtown core

Denis Carrier

1. Promote and maximize the talents and potential of all personnel towards ALL city issues. There is no "I" in TEAM. I will support a "LOCAL FIRST" approach using our own talents and expertise! KEEP IT LOCAL!
2. COMMON SENSE approach towards the planning and implementation of future visions and goals.
3. Meet the needs of our SENIORS.
4. Encourage and support the REVITALIZATION of our unique downtown business core.

Rajko Dodic (policy information below from the Lehtbridge Herald and Lethbridge Accountability Survey)

1. Increase population density of Lethbridge
2. Attendance at events be shared between mayor and alderman more
3. Improve senior services

4. Renew City centre

“This has been a priority of Council for some time. In fact, it is included as a goal in the integrated strategic plan for the City (Towards a Sustainable Future). A number of examples of recent initiatives that have enhanced the downtown include the recently expanded Southern Alberta Art Gallery, the water feature in Galt Gardens which was a partnership with the Rotary Club and the City, the ‘new’ Bowman that is about to be built, the public art being exhibited and the efforts being made to deal with abandoned developments such as the ‘atrium’ building. Downtown was the ‘hub’ of Lethbridge years ago and it should again become more of a destination point than it has in the recent past and I support initiatives that strive to achieve that goal.”

5. Improve homelessness

“The Province has provided provincial funds to the City to attempt to deal with affordable housing issues and, to the extent that homelessness is economically related (as opposed to psychologically driven), the City through their Affordable Housing Committee, in consultation with SHIA, has contributed to projects in partnership with others organizations that would allow people access to affordable housing with one example being the partnership between a local organization and the City in the Castle Apartments. But not all homelessness is economically driven and in the cases where it is not, the City facilitates community and other groups that are attempting to assist the homeless.”

James Frey

1. Seniors: the City has done a great job creating awareness in Edmonton, now we need to go there and directly lobby for increased funding for seniors programming. We also need to recognize the value our seniors have in our community and how their centres are developing our community. The City should be providing more funding to the two senior's centres.
2. Relations with other governments: we need to take a more active approach in dealing with the Provincial and Federal governments, particularly around funding. Selling Lethbridge to Edmonton or Ottawa is one thing, directly lobbying their support and securing additional funding is another matter entirely.
3. Community development: funding for community programs should go to the areas that serve the people most in need: like literacy programs for children and adults. Social housing needs to be looked at – is it still achieving its goals? Are there other options to help the homeless? The City’s entire suite of programs should be looked at in terms of duplication or gaps. Society is becoming more diverse, the city needs to mirror that diversity and that starts with City Hall. More city departments should hire a diverse workforce.
4. Arts and culture: programs should be in place to support citizen’s appreciation of arts and culture. The City has no place suggesting to citizens what is good art. I propose that the current

art acquisition program be suspended and those funds be used to support art education programs delivered in the community. The City will encourage the donation of art from private donors, artists and foundations. A review of all City funding to arts, culture, sports and recreation programs will be conducted with the goal of determining duplication and gaps.

5. Environment: environmentally sustainable practices can also save money – like ensuring City vehicles have the right tire pressure, limited idling of vehicles, using more energy efficient lighting and heating in City facilities. That should be better for the environment and save money of fuel. We also need to listen to the experts. I propose establishing a volunteer environmental advisory board to act as a clearinghouse of environmental information for City Hall and the citizens to make informed decisions about sustainability. There should also be a single office responsible for environmental sustainability within the City, similar to what Medicine Hat's [Hat Smart](#).

6. Economic Development: We need to determine where we want to go as a city. Do we want to be Lethbridge or Calgary 2.0. We need to grow our existing small business base. The City will work closely with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Home Builder's Association, the Auto Dealers Association to develop a set of policies that support our business community. We need to look at existing business license policy to see if there are ways to streamline and take down some of the barriers that impede business growth. Still the best way to encourage economic development is to lower taxes.

Cheryl Meheden

1. Better consideration of business community needs

2. Provide incentives for smaller businesses to come to Lethbridge

“Current home business license rates exceed most other Alberta cities and first time applicants also pay a \$200 development fee. A review of the current process could explore alternatives that would result in more licenses being issued. Fee structures could be based on a simple assessment (such as is the business incorporated, not for profit, require customers to come to the home, etc.) and then a sliding fee schedule based on those criteria could be applied. To encourage applications, the City could produce a business directory that lists the businesses by category, allowing potential customers to easily access home based business information. An increase in the number of licenses and increased community awareness of home based businesses contributes to making Lethbridge a business friendly community.”

3. Greening the City by exploring alternative energy use where appropriate, waste management etc., continued use and maintenance of the City parks and trail systems.

“Lethbridge has good green initiatives and with some enhancements these could be significantly better. The number of recycling stations could be enhanced through more availability and more variety in acceptable recyclables. For example, recycling stations could be planned and built in

areas that reflect the size of surrounding neighbourhoods, reducing the driving distance necessary to recycle. Ideas for generating less garbage and incentives for those who succeed should also be encouraged. For example, households with small garbage bins might pay less than those with big ones. Even though the garbage removal cost is the same, the smaller bins put less into the landfill.”

“Lethbridge is seriously lacking in environmentally friendly services, including curbside recycling. I agree with you that the City needs to do more in this area, and that begins with a plan. Without a plan the City response will be disjointed, expensive, and satisfy only small pockets of populations. In my discussions with environmental groups and experts (who live here in Lethbridge) I have solidified my belief that Lethbridge needs an environmental-energy master plan that is facilitated by an individual who has authority and accountability. Suggestions for this have included an eco-energy council (similar to the Sports Council & Allied Arts Council), a senior level manager (similar to the budget manager), or an externally supported department (similar to Economic Development). The plan will have a broad scope and include waste management, lowering consumption, increasing education, providing incentive programs, developing a user-friendly bicycle or personal conveyance device commuting system, and on and on; including your suggestion for partnerships. Fortunately there are a lot of good models to follow, including those found in the cities of Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and Edmonton.”

4. Availability of services for recreation, culture and commerce.

5. On fiscal responsibility—“Recent changes to the City’s investment policy shift towards more secure investments. The return on these investments is lower, but is also guaranteed. This is a good move for those who value a conservative investment approach, which is common when public funds are at stake. Another suggestion was to have a special financial advisor oversee these investments. It was suggested to me that the expense of having someone oversee guaranteed investments was not a good use of resources. Low risk investments with guaranteed returns should not need an expensive overseer. I tend to agree that if proper processes are in place, expensive monitoring should not be required. The next council should follow up and review the investment policy to ensure the correct processes are in place.”

6. Would not enforce mandatory cycling helmets:

“The other area I question is enforcement. Fining helmet-less cyclists is not like issuing parking tickets or a citation for an un-shovelled walk. Would the time/effort/expense in enforcement be better used in another area? Perhaps investing in more bike-friendly roads and pathways?

I think a helmet is a good idea. I would suggest you wear one. A suggestion allows free-thinking, responsible citizens to choose their response.”

7. Skate park. Meheden does not commit the City to building a new skate park.

“I believe the LSA has crafted a highly effective approach to ensuring skate parks are on the list of city priorities. They have researched their position, provided supporting evidence and

appropriate examples, and followed a strategy that ensures they are heard and taken seriously by the existing and new city council. LSA will be the small group of thoughtful, committed citizens that may not change the world, but will certainly change the Lethbridge skateboard landscape for the better.”

FDA Comments:

Does Meheden have clear, actual policies? If not, it appears she is lacking in leadership to be mayor.

Chris Spearman

1. Demonstrate that operational spending can be managed prudently.
2. Build confidence in Lethbridge City Council throughout the community.
3. Lobby external funding sources for our major capital priorities.
4. Examine opportunities to reduce our environmental footprint.
5. Act as a champion for our community partners and support them in the achievement of their goals.

Evaluation:

Basis for evaluation: the degree to which the policies add to or detract from the better interest of the Lethbridge people as a whole.

Scores:

Kay Adeniyi	4/10
Denis Carrier	2/10
Rajko Dodic	3/10
James Frey	6/10
Cheryl Meheden	6/10
Chris Spearman	3/10

Rationals:

Kay Adeniyi good ideas; general; not comprehensive; no description of policies; need plan of action.

Denis Carrier less ideas than Adeniyi; not comprehensive.

Rajko Dodic general ideas; not comprehensive.

James Frey focused; good approaches; not comprehensive.

Cheryl Meheden a lot of ideas; environmental focus; not comprehensive.

Chris Spearman vague, general.

FDA Comments:

Mr. James Frey has the most comprehensive policies for Lethbridge.

Mr. Rajko Dodic did not use a website, nor as far as the FDA knows, he did not provide a clear, comprehensive policy platform for his candidacy.

Overall Audit Results

Backgrounds

	Political	Professional	Volunteer/Extracurricular
Kay Adeniyi	0/10	5/10	2/10
Denis Carrier	0/10	7/10	7/10
Rajko Dodic	7/10	8/10	7/10
James Frey	0/10	8/10	8/10
Cheryl Meheden	0/10	8/10	8/10
Chris Spearman	8.5/10	8/10	7/10

Totals for background

Kay Adeniyi	7/30 (23.3%)	2.3/10
Denis Carrier	14/30 (46.6%)	4.6/10
Rajko Dodic	22/30 (73.3%)	7.3/10
James Frey	16/30 (53.3%)	5.3/10
Cheryl Meheden	16/30 (53.3%)	5.3/10
Chris Spearman	23.5/30 (78.3%)	7.8/10

Vision

Kay Adeniyi	5/10
Denis Carrier	4/10
Rajko Dodic	no score (no vision applicable)
James Frey	4/10
Cheryl Meheden	4/10
Chris Spearman	5/10

Totals for background and vision

Kay Adeniyi	7.3/20
Denis Carrier	8.6/20
Rajko Dodic	7.3/10
James Frey	9.3/20
Cheryl Meheden	9.3/20
Chris Spearman	13.8/20

Policies

	City Taxes	Public Transit	Accountability	Miscellaneous
Kay Adeniyi	5/10	4/10	6/10	4/10
Denis Carrier	0/10	0/10	3/10	2/10
Rajko Dodic	4/10	1/10	3/10	3/10
James Frey	7/10	4/10	7/10	6/10
Cheryl Meheden	5/10	4/10	5/10	6/10
Chris Spearman	0/10	0/10	3/10	3/10

Totals for Policies

Kay Adeniyi	19/40
Denis Carrier	5/40
Rajko Dodic	11/40
James Frey	24/40
Cheryl Meheden	20/40
Chris Spearman	6/40

Total Scores

Kay Adeniyi	26.3/60
Denis Carrier	13.6/60
Rajko Dodic	18.3/50
James Frey	33.3/60
Cheryl Meheden	29.3/60
Chris Spearman	19.8/60

Overall grade and ranking

1. James Frey 33.3/60 (55.5%) (D+)
2. Cheryl Meheden 29.3/60 (48.8%) (F)
3. Kay Adeniyi 26.3/60 (43.8%) (F)
4. Rajko Dodic 18.3/50 (36.6%) (F)
5. Chris Spearman 19.8/60 (33%) (F)
6. Denis Carrier 13.6/60 (22.6%) (F)

Analysis:

The FDA audit team reached consensus on all the scores. All scores were supported by reasons, and consistent with the allocation of all other scores in the audit. Though there is no percentage of error in this audit report, the FDA is confident its results are accurate reasonably, due to the objective nature of the audit and the comparative framework of the scoring.

All mayoral candidates, with the exception of Mr. Dodic, fully cooperated with information requests from the FDA.

Only one of the six mayoral candidates, James Frey, received a passing grade. Also, Mr. Frey's passing grade of 55.5% is barely satisfactory.

Only James Fray and Cherly Medheden received passing grades for their policies.

Overall, the policies of the candidates were lacking comprehensiveness and scope.

Through Chris Spearman received the highest score for background (78.3%), it did not translate into him receiving the highest overall score.

The mediocre results are consistent with other FDA audits such as:

2010 FDA Calgary Mayoral Audit

1. Jon Lord	57/100	57% (D+)
2. Barb Higgins	53.8/100	53.8% (D)
3. Craig Burrows	52/100	52% (D)
4. Naheed Nenshi	51.8/100	51.8% (D)
5. Richard McIver	43.8/90	48.6% (F)
6. Joe Connelly	42.7/90	47.4% (F)
7. Dan Knight	46.8/100	46.8% (F)
8. Barry Erskine	38/90	42.2% (F)
9. Bonnie Devine	29/100	29% (F)

2010 British Election Audit Ranking

1. Nick Clegg, Liberal Democrat 67.8% (C+)
2. David Cameron, Conservative 65.8% (C+)
3. Gordon Brown, Labour 63.4% (C)

2008 Alberta Provincial Election Audit Ranking

1. Wildrose Alliance 63.5% (C)
2. Alberta Liberals 63.2% (C)
3. Social Credit 49.3% (F)
4. PC Alberta 43.6% (F)
5. Separation Party 43.1% (F)
6. Alberta's NDP 41.8% (F)
7. Communist Party 26.8% (F)
8. Alberta's Greens 20% (F)
9. Alberta Party 17.1% (F)

Conclusion:

The audit results for the Lethbridge mayoral candidates are disappointing, since only one of the six candidates received a passing grade and the passing grade itself was barely satisfactory.

Moreover, Lethbridge municipal politics are troubled by very low voter turnout, as indicated by the 22.6% of eligible voters who voted in the 2007 Lethbridge Municipal election. The very low turnout may be related to the quality of political candidates as may be indicated by this audit.

James Frey is clearly the FDA's better representative for Lethbridge, with a 7% margin over Cheryl Meheden.

As in the case with the 2010 FDA Calgary Mayoral audit, the mediocre results do not bode well for the next three years of Lethbridge municipal politics.

The FDA recommends that the new Lethbridge mayor be given a limited mandate by the Lethbridge public through a minority percentage of the actual vote.