

## **Introduce yourself:**

Hi. I am Barbara Derbawka-Stevenson and have lived in Eston for over 25 years. I was born and raised on the family farm north of Borden, Sask.

After completing Grade 12 in Borden I attended a secretarial college. Upon graduating I worked for 9 months at Auto Clearing and then obtained employment with Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) for 8 years. I started my CMHC career as a clerk. My last position with CMHC was as Real Estate Manager in Edmonton, Alberta. This new position was created for me after a 12 month training course which I completed in 9 months. I was responsible for a \$1.5 million real estate portfolio made up of residential and commercial properties located in urban and rural areas of Alberta in a line from Edmonton and up the to northern boundary.

I left CMHC in 1983 to attend the University of Saskatchewan. I had completed my 2nd year working towards a Public Administration degree, when my education was interrupted with a job offer in the Saskatchewan Credit Union system.

After stops in Saskatoon and Kamsack, my career in the Credit Union system brought me to Eston as a Senior Lender with Prairie Center Credit Union. I met my life partner (Scott Stevenson) in 1996 and my work career aspirations became limited. With Scott, we operate a successful grain farm operation.

I was fortunate enough to have my career path take me to Synergy Credit Union in Kindersley in 2009. In 2010, I became the Branch Manager of the Kindersley location and with an excellent team was able to grow the branch assets over \$40 million to almost \$200 million total. After 28 years in the Credit Union system, I retired in June, 2015. With retirement, I had some more time and was able to consider doing something I had aspired to since the age of 16 - run for public office and greater service to my community. While working full time, I was not able to commit the time needed.

In October, 2017 I ran for Town Council and was successful in a second by-election. The councilor role has given me valuable knowledge and experience as to how municipalities are run in today's world. From courses that I have taken, the training that I received has expanded my knowledge and have learned that over the last 5 to 10 years there have been many changes in the Human Resources area as it relates to the roles and responsibilities of councilors, mayor and employees as well as residents. Not adhering to, or not being aware of these changes can impact the municipality from a monetary and insurance viewpoint. While these changes may not always be best for a community, they are valuable to be aware of when making decisions or creating a new way of doing things.

During my entire working career, I have been an active volunteer in the communities that I resided in. While working in Eston, Eatonia & Kindersley, I volunteered for a number of organizations and continue that involvement today - Board Chair – Great Plains College; Co-Chair – Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges; Treasurer – Rotary Club of Kindersley; Treasurer – Dr. Holmes Scholarship committee; Secretary – Ilarion Residence (church related senior citizen's home in Saskatoon); Eston 4-H sewing project leader .

As a Board member of Great Plains College, I was fortunate to be able to take training and have obtained a Certificate in Public Service Governance. This is an intensive 3 day course on the process of governing or overseeing the control and direction of an organization with a written exam that requires a 75% pass rate. I have also been able to create relationships at the Provincial Ministry level. The Town of Eston is an organization created under Provincial Legislation - The Municipalities Act. Networking is critical to being able to pick up the phone or meet with government officials who impact how municipalities can carry out or achieve some of their decisions.

### **Question 1**

This fraction can fluctuate depending on the time line of strategic planning. In a best case scenario, the best split would be 50/50.

Growth in economic terms is defined as the process or manner of growing, developing or gradually increasing the size of your community.

Sustainability is the ability to maintain and to focus on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs. Sustainability is economic, environmental and social or profits, planet and people. Sustainability has emerged from the corporate world where it was thought that public discontent over long term damage is caused by a focus on short term profits.

In order to achieve growth, sustainability is needed to ensure that there are sufficient resources (monetary) left over to provide incentives to encourage that growth. Potential businesses and residents want to move to a community where, in addition to creating wealth, they also have a good standard of living. However over-taxing the existing tax base is not a way to provide resources to encourage growth and hence sustainability.

Notwithstanding the above, growth and sustainability are long term and do not occur overnight or even in 5 years. How rate of growth can be sustained without taking on new debt or raising more funds from existing tax payers will be very important discussions for the new council.

## **Question 2**

In any organization, continued training is a must for employees to be able to carry out their job better. Sometimes this training is paid for by the employer, however more and more the employee pays for it and then is reimbursed based on a passing percentage as well as earning back.

If an employee is hired without the necessary skills to complete the responsibilities of the job they would underfill and the cost of training to get to the level of fulfilling the job skill requirements would be the employees cost. Training such as that for equipment, needs to be weighed against the cost of savings vs the time and money required to take this training. There may not be efficiency gains or savings.

Depending on the training provided, employees may be able to earn back the training by staying employed with the Town for a certain period of time. If an employee leaves before the training is earned back, then the outstanding unearned value would need to be repaid.

## **Question 3**

Local governments in Canada own approximately 60% of the public infrastructure. This supports our economy and quality of life. Much of this infrastructure is 50 years or older and is requiring, and requires significant attention today. Over the past 10 years, councils have started, and will continue to review this infrastructure to determine next steps. In the past, decisions sometimes were made in reaction to an issue. This cannot continue, as, unless municipalities grow their tax base, raising funds from increased taxes and fees might result in other issues (non payment leading to arrears, abandonment, etc.). As well, how much increase can residents afford?

As municipal organizations we need to understand where the issues are, discuss, determine cost, consult with the tax payers - in some type of forum, whether online or face to face or both and then make a decision. In the 25 years that I have been in Eston, I have not been aware of consultation in a town forum or similar meeting, with the taxpayer as to decisions that Council is considering, or explaining, other than through the newspaper or Wednesday Words, the rationale for decisions.

Decisions need to be made after an extensive process and not knee-jerk in reaction. I don't want to be part of a council that will be repairing sections of Main Street a 4th time because we did not understand how worn out the infrastructure is (water & sewer pipes).

Thank you for allowing me to respond to the questions as posed.

Barb Derbawka-Stevenson, PS Gov