

Introduce yourself:

Hello, my name is Matt Toner, I am 34 years old and I currently reside in Eston with my wife Sandi. Sandi is a counsellor for the Sun West School Division. I have been a resident of the Town of Eston since 2003 and am proud to call Eston my home.

I am employed at HES Manufacturing, a local small business which has been producing agricultural storage products for the past 14 years. I have been with HES for 11 years.

Question 1

It would be my opinion that without sustainability, growth would not be possible. Therefore, I would assert that sustainability is the more important of the two. If these recent times of uncertainty have shown us anything, it is the importance of stability in our lives and in our community.

I believe that the split between growth and sustainability is an ever-changing balance. As the economic situation changes, so too should the priorities of the town. With that being said, prosperous times will bring forth the opportunity for growth. It is the responsibility of the town council to have enough of a forward-thinking mindset to seize opportunities when they arise.

Question 2

Training of employees for me seems to be a win win proposition. The town/taxpayers win in the situation where costs are reduced by having more in-house skills available to our town. Any skill set which an individual gains will also have an intrinsic value in other areas of their job. Employees win by feeling empowered through the positive effects of personal growth. This also shows town employees that we as ratepayers, appreciate, value and respect them as skilled individuals working for our town. I am currently unsure of the legislation in regards to education vs time of service contracts in a municipal government. This is something I would definitely urge the town to explore if possible.

I am aware that offering education incentives can also be a fiscal gamble. In any system which exists in our lives, some people may see it as an opportunity to find loopholes or take advantage. To offer my personal opinion on this issue; I truly feel that encouraging any person to further their education and gain more skills is a good thing. Sometimes people move on to bigger and better opportunities. I would feel good about having aided someone to further develop their skillset. I feel this would ultimately pay dividends for that individual, our town, our province, and any future employers of said individual.

Question 3

Each situation is unique. Large infrastructure projects which can be discussed carefully and in great length, will have a much different process than infrastructure failures which require urgent and immediate action. More preventative maintenance will allow deeper discussion at each step of the process. With that being said, upkeep costs present a large problem for municipalities with a small tax base. I believe it is the roll of a responsible town council to evaluate everything on an ongoing basis. Just as our needs as people grow and change, so too do the needs of our town. I also believe that our council should represent an accurate cross-section of members of our community. This is key in trying to best serve the needs of all. Different viewpoints and open and frank discussion of all sides of an argument should be encouraged and welcomed. I would urge all voters to consider this on election day.