

# 2017 Municipal Election Survey 2017

## – Calgary –

Thank you for participating in the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's election survey. Please provide your responses to Colin Craig ([ccraig@taxpayer.com](mailto:ccraig@taxpayer.com)) by **September 29** (end of day). Results will be posted at Taxpayer.com, sent to the media and emailed to our supporters.

Name:   Linda Johnson   Signature:                     *Linda Johnson*                    

1) Will you introduce a motion (or support one tabled by a colleague) to scan and post council expense receipts online? (Just as the province does for MLA expenses) <i>Comment:</i>	YES
2) Will you protect taxpayers from additional financial risk and excessive costs by introducing a motion (or support one tabled by a colleague) to place new city employees, and council members, in a less costly pension plan? (Defined contribution) <i>Comment:</i>	NO
3) Will you vote to reduce city employee salaries by 5% (or reduce total salary expenditures by 5%) – just as many employees in Calgary's business sector received during the recession? <i>Comment:</i>	NO
4) Will you introduce a motion (or support one tabled by a colleague) to cap property tax increases at inflation? (Statistics Canada's CPI for Calgary) <i>Comment:</i>	NO
5) Will you support a motion to halt spending on public art until the city's unemployment rate is below the national average? <i>Comment:</i>	NO
6) Do you believe a referendum should be held prior to council approving any bids to host the 2026 Winter Olympics? <i>Comment:</i>	YES
7) Do you support reviewing city services and exploring activities that could be contracted out to save taxpayers money? <i>Comment:</i>	YES
8) Do you support spending public funds on a new arena for the Flames? <i>Comment:</i>	YES
9) Have you accepted or will you accept financial or in-kind donations from the Calgary Flames, any of the team's owners or their companies? <i>Comment:</i>	NO

## **Additional Comments: Linda Johnson**

### **Question 2: No**

Councillors need to work to create and maintain an engaged, motivated workforce, and a respectful compensation plan is part of this. It goes without saying that Council would need to lead-by-example on this issue, and that all aspects of employee compensation need to be examined in this economic and fiscal climate. However, I would need to know the specifics and context of such a motion before determining whether it would be appropriate to support it.

### **Question 3: No**

My first choice of action would not be to reduce salary expenditures, as this would impact the income that employees and their families could re-invest into the economy by spending at local businesses. We need to consider the overall spending envelope related to salaries and compensation. For example, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce has identified that Calgary overspends, per-capita, on human resources administration compared to other major Canadian cities, and that if this spending was brought into line, it would result in millions of dollars in savings. If the overall salary and compensation envelope is still high after anomalies like this are addressed, I would be prepared to look at further spending reductions in this area through a number of strategies, including the elimination of positions through attrition.

### **Question 4: No**

While I am in favour of restricting property tax growth to be as little as possible, such as the 0% target that I have set for the upcoming year's budget, I cannot support answer 'yes' to this question due to how it is worded. I am in favour of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce's recommendation that the City constrain spending growth to be within the "smart spending bandwidth" (limiting spending increases to be no more than inflation plus population growth). I would also press City administration to strive to find efficiencies in how services are delivered. Numerous current and former employees of the City have told me that tens, if not hundreds, of millions of tax dollars could be saved through process improvements and technological advancement. Using these strategies, I would seek to deliver extensively limited, if not zero, growth to property taxes for Calgary residents and businesses.

### **Question 5: No**

As we build Calgary's reputation and status as a world-class city, public art needs to be part of the conversation. I am in support of the motion that was introduced and passed by Council in September, to suspend and revise the Corporate Public Art Policy in order to ensure that it is serving the best interests of Calgarians. However, it must be acknowledged that the vast majority of money that Council spends on public art goes towards local businesses that construct the pieces of art. Halting spending on public art beyond the time specified in Councillor Chu's motion could have a detrimental impact on these businesses and cause Calgarians employed by these businesses to lose their jobs, which is not something that I could support.

### **Question 8: Yes**

While I support spending public funds on a new arena for the Flames, there must be a demonstrable public benefit and return on investment for the City's contribution.