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## Nenshi Campaign Answers to Canadian Taxpayers Federation's election survey

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**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)**

NO - I already upload all my expenses online quarterly and I have encouraged all of my council colleagues to do the same. Scanning all receipts will just produce a lot of unnecessary overhead expense.

**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)**

NO - This cannot be done unilaterally and would have to be a part of comprehensive labour negotiations, however, our negotiations do need to maximize value for the taxpayer. Focusing just on pensions though could cost us far more as a city by creating additional salary demands from employees to compensate for lost pension revenue.

**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?**

NO - See the above. Council cannot do this without breaking the current collective agreement and exposing The City of Calgary to legal action. However, we do need to be very tough and fair in the upcoming labour negotiations, understanding that our current labour agreements predate the economic downturn.

**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)**

NO - Statistics Canada's CPI does not accurately reflect municipal inflation cost pressures and does not account for city population growth. The Municipal Price Index (MPI) is a more accurate gauge of inflation for cities.

Under my leadership as mayor, the growth of the City's operating budget has been less than population growth plus inflation, as measured by the MPI - nearly 3% lower. From 2011 to 2016 Calgary's population increased 13.2%, while the MPI increased 16.6%. Taken together, population growth plus municipal inflation totaled 29.8%. The City's operating budget increased from \$2911.1 million in 2011 to \$3694.5 million in 2016: a 26.9% increase.

**5) Will you support a motion to halt spending on public art until the city's unemployment rate is below the national average?**

NO - Why would we pass a motion that would have us procure and install public art during expensive boom times? You would remove the ability to use public art as stimulus and hire unemployed Calgarians when we need to get people working. The majority of public art funding is spent in Calgary as most public art is

fabricated here and requires Calgarians to install it. The public art program is currently suspended pending forthcoming recommendations to engage the public in the public art program more effectively.

**6) Do you believe a referendum should be held prior to council approving any bids to host the 2026 Winter Olympics?**

Maybe - I am not opposed to the idea, but it must be on a specific plan and not a general principle. Also, it would have to be a municipal plebiscite as binding municipal referendums are not legal in Alberta.

**7) Do you support reviewing city services and exploring activities that could be contracted out to save taxpayers money?**

YES - We do this already through our Zero Based Review (ZBR) program, under my tenure as mayor, we have contracted out some services. The ZBR program has thus far identified more than \$50 million in recurring, annual savings for taxpayers.

**8) Do you support spending public funds on a new arena for the Flames?**

YES - But public funds, if any, must be for public benefit. It cannot be a simple grant with no social or financial return to the taxpayer.

**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?**

NO - Not that I know of. I have recently disclosed all of my donors, but there are over 1300 of them, so if someone associated with the Flames bought a t-shirt, it may have slipped through.

I am curious, that though your survey asks questions about municipal spending and costs, both broad and narrow, you don't ask about the biggest pressures on the City's budget: the cost of growth and development. Over the last seven years we have come to a consensus agreement between Industry, Council and City Administration, where the full cost of new development are paid for fully by the new communities. In the future I would hope that an organization established to defend taxpayers will place greater focus on the real items that drive the City's long term fiscal responsibility, rather than devoting inordinate time to pursuing symbolic matters that make minor impacts on the taxes paid by Calgarians in relative terms.