

## ***2018 Winnipeg Municipal Election: Candidates' views on small business issues***

Dear Candidate: Local government policies are important to business owners and they would like to know where you stand on their priority issues.

CFIB has developed a Small Business Platform for City of Winnipeg Municipal Candidates, which highlights key small business priorities for municipal candidates to adopt (see attached).

We also invite you to respond to our survey. Please feel free to provide additional written comments on a separate page. Responses will be posted, unedited, on CFIB's website in an effort to better inform our members of each candidate's views. We will also share responses with our members prior to the elections on October 24th.

Please complete the following brief survey and send it back to us by email at [msman@cfib.ca](mailto:msman@cfib.ca) or by fax at 204-982-0811 by Monday, October 15th, 2018. Note: If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact us at 1-888-234-2232 or [msman@cfib.ca](mailto:msman@cfib.ca).

**Thank you for your participation.**

Jonathan Alward, Director, Provincial Affairs, Manitoba

### **1. How important is the small business sector to Winnipeg's economy? (Select one)**

*Small Businesses are critical to our local economy and our identity as a city. Small businesses provide employment to our citizens and produce many of the products and services that we use on a daily basis. I believe that small business owners and their representatives such as the CFIB are an incredibly important stakeholder and provide valuable input into the policy discussion at City Hall.*

☐ Very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not important

### **2. Which of the following options do you support for financing the City of Winnipeg? (Select all that apply)**

☐ Increase existing property taxes, business

taxes, levies and/or user fees ☐ Expand taxing authority (e.g. new user fees,

development levies etc.) ☐ Increase savings through operational

efficiencies (e.g. contracting out services to the private sector) ☐ Spend more than current levels on

infrastructure by finding efficiencies in other areas ☐ No further need for increased revenues ☐ Other

*Winnipeg is a growing City that is on track to reach one million people in the not too distant future. Property taxes are the primary source of revenue for most cities in North America but I believe that property taxes alone are insufficient to address the increasing infrastructure and service demands that we face as a growing city. That is why, as a Council we took the difficult but necessary step to implement Impact Fees as a funding source to offset some of the cost of new infrastructure in new and emerging communities, so that this cost is not entirely borne by existing property taxpayers. It is also why, if I am fortunate enough to be re-elected Mayor, I will continue to advocate for a strong, stable, predictable, and growth-oriented funding arrangement from the Province of Manitoba.*

### **3. Do you support or oppose the following actions? (Check one for each row)**

**Support** **Oppose**

Narrow the wages/benefits gap between municipal and private sector employees (the gap is 17% in Winnipeg)

Reduce the size and cost of the municipal civil service (e.g. through workforce attrition)

Limit annual municipal operating spending growth to a maximum of inflation and population growth

Develop and implement a plan to reduce the commercial-to- residential property tax gap

*As a City, we must always be looking for ways to deliver services more efficiently as well as opportunities to save money, just like you would expect a small business owner to do. This means ensuring that we have the right size and complement within the public service to deliver the services that citizens expect. As you are likely aware, we have been successful in negotiating long-term collective agreements with most of our major unions that provided for savings in excess of \$21 million and that will be sustainable over the long term, while providing fair wages to our valued employees. As you will also be aware, our 2018 operating budget limited the year-over-year expenditure growth to 1.3%, which is among the lowest growth in the history of our City and lower than the rate of inflation and population growth.*

*Regarding your question on residential and commercial property taxes, you should be aware that Winnipeg is bound by The City of Winnipeg Charter to establish a single rate of property tax that applies to all properties that are subject to taxation. The portioning rate (i.e the value of the property that is subject to tax) of different property classes is determined by regulation under The Municipal Assessment Act and the Education Support Levy that applies to all properties except farm and residential is prescribed under The Public Schools Act. Therefore, there is limited ability for the City to address disparities in property taxation between commercial and residential properties without changes to provincial legislation.*

Develop and implement a plan to eliminate the Winnipeg Business Tax

Take concrete steps to reduce red tape

**4. Which of the following options do you support for reducing red tape in Winnipeg? (Select all that apply)**

☐ Create a web-portal for residents and

business owners to easily share feedback and suggestions to improve services ☐ Improve staff training around serving small

businesses ☐ Expand the hours of service ☐ Creating a separate 311 line to serve

business inquiries ☐ Reduce wait times for building and

occupancy permits ☐ Improve clarity around permits ☐ No further improvements are needed to

reduce the regulatory burden ☐ Other

*As a City we should always be looking at ways to deliver services more efficiently with less red tape and in a more cost effective manner. I believe that rather than pursuing a broad brush approach to reducing red tape we need to identify specific areas that need to be improved and target our efforts in those areas. One example of this has been in the creation of the permit logistics desk which was created in partnership with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce to help business and property owners navigate the permit process. I remain open to working with groups like the CFIB to identify other specific services and areas that we can focus on to deliver in a more efficient way and with less red tape.*

**See questions 5 & 6 on page 2.**

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### **5. What plans do you have to reduce the negative impacts of roadwork on businesses?**

*With record road renewals underway this year and in the future I understand and appreciate the impact that these projects can have on businesses. I believe one of the most effective ways that we can mitigate the impact of road construction on businesses is to undertake better communication with affected businesses sooner.*

*I also believe that as we embark on what will be an almost \$1 billion road renewal program over the next six years we need to look at ways to complete projects as efficiently and quickly as possible. That is why during the course of this campaign I have committed to creating a task force between City and industry officials to examine ways to improve the road renewal tendering process as well as looking at 24 hour construction, where feasible, to ensure that we increase the level of road renewals while getting projects done faster.*

### **6. What plans do you have to make the City of Winnipeg more business-friendly?**

*As you are likely aware, Winnipeg has been identified by KPMG as being the city with the lowest costs of doing business in Western Canada and the U.S. Midwest. That being said, we always need to be looking at ways to maintain and enhance our competitive cost advantage vis-a-vis other cities. During the last term of Council, we have reduced the business tax by 9.8% and increased the small business tax threshold which has eliminated the business tax for about half of Winnipeg businesses. I remain committed to working to eliminate the business tax in the future.*

*One of the most significant costs that businesses face in many cases is property taxes and Winnipeg currently has among the lowest municipal property taxes in Canada. My first campaign promise was to limit the annual growth in property taxes to 2.33% with these increases exclusively dedicated to fixing our roads and financing Stage 2 of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor. This will provide certainty to both businesses and homeowners, while ensuring that property taxes remain affordable. I am also committed to working with businesses to identify ways to reduce red tape so that business owners can spend less time navigating processes at City Hall and more time running their businesses.*

**Candidate's Name: Brian Bowman**

**Ward/Position: Mayor**

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Website: [www.cfib.ca](http://www.cfib.ca) Follow us on Twitter: @cfibMB

**Please email responses to [msman@cfib.ca](mailto:msman@cfib.ca) or fax to 1-204-982-0811.**