Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly on Councillor Employment and Compensation

Final Report

November 2016
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To members of Lethbridge City Council:

I am pleased to provide to Council the recommendations of the Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly on Councillor Employment and Compensation.

As you are aware, the Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly was created by Council to provide the informed and considered perspective of Lethbridge residents on the question of increasing the role of elected Councillors from part-time to full-time employment, and to consider appropriate compensation.

I can report that the members of the Assembly were faithful to this task and conducted their deliberations with great interest and dedication. During the course of three Saturday sessions and one evening public meeting, the members of the Assembly each invested some thirty or more hours to develop their recommendations. Cumulatively, this represents some 1,080 hours volunteered by Lethbridge residents to support the work of Council.

On behalf of the Assembly, I would like to convey to Council the members’ appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about municipal governance and to consider the role and responsibilities of elected Councillors.

I believe the members’ work and this report demonstrates the willingness and ability of Lethbridge residents to play a constructive and engaged role in the work of local government.

Sincerely,

Peter MacLeod
Moderator, Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly on Councillor Employment and Compensation
Understanding the Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly

The Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly on Councillor Employment and Compensation was created by Lethbridge City Council as a deliberative process to engage residents. The Assembly had a mandate to represent all Lethbridge residents and learn about the work of municipal government and the role and duties of elected Councillors. The Assembly was also tasked with considering the evolving workload of Councillors as well as the employment and compensation practices in similar jurisdictions.

Together, members of the Assembly were tasked with providing to Council a final report containing:

1. A set of values to guide decision-making about Councillor employment and compensation;
2. A recommendation on whether Councillors are employed part-time or full-time, or some variation thereof; and
3. A recommendation concerning appropriate compensation for Councillors.

Each member was asked to attend each of the three full-day sessions as well as an evening public roundtable meeting. Members were also asked to attempt to represent the varied perspectives of all Lethbridge residents, to treat each other with respect and to take an active role in the work of the Assembly. Finally, each member was asked to work collaboratively in order to achieve a strong consensus concerning the Assembly’s recommendations.

The Assembly was chaired by Peter MacLeod, a consultant with significant expertise in participatory processes. He was supported by a facilitation team that included two graduate students from the University of Lethbridge, as well as colleagues from Calgary and Queen’s University.

This team and the Assembly process was also overseen by a three-member volunteer advisory committee that included two professors of political science, Harold Jansen, University of Lethbridge and Melanee Thomas, University of Calgary, as well as Ron Hicks, a former clerk of the Executive Council and head of the Alberta Public Service. This committee reviewed the curriculum developed to inform the Assembly’s deliberations and was also available to address any concerns raised by members of the Assembly.

Members of the Assembly were selected by civic lottery. 5,000 invitations were mailed to randomly selected households throughout Lethbridge. Transferable to any member of the household aged 18 and older, the invitation asked residents to volunteer to serve on the Assembly. Elect-
ed representatives as well as staff in management positions at the City of Lethbridge were ineligible to participate.

More than 600 Lethbridge residents responded to the invitation indicating their interest in the process. Among these respondents, 117 residents volunteered to serve on the Assembly. From among these volunteers, 36 individuals were randomly selected to be Assembly members. This was done in such a way as to ensure that the Assembly would enjoy gender parity, match the age distribution of the population and be comprised of equal numbers of members representing each of the city’s three principal neighbourhoods. Two seats were also reserved for volunteers who identified as Indigenous. Regrettably one member of the Assembly chose to withdraw following the second session citing a personal matter.
Meet the Assembly Members

Alan Ankutowicz, West End: I grew up in Fernie, BC. I moved to Lethbridge to obtain a university degree, which I completed in 1987; Lethbridge has been home ever since. My daughter graduated from the University of Lethbridge and went on to complete a master’s degree at the University of Alberta. My son is in his last semester of undergrad at the University of Lethbridge this year. It’s been a great city to raise my kids.

Kama Baradji, West End.

Tigist Baranichael, North End: I have lived in Lethbridge for 27 years this December. I manage apartment buildings and do some bookkeeping for local businesses. I decided to volunteer for the Citizens’ Assembly because Lethbridge is my home; I want to contribute to my community, and the Assembly allows me to do that. In my spare time, I love watching my kids play sports (especially basketball).

Luke Bendkowski, South/West End: I grew up in Lethbridge, and have lived here ever since. I graduated from the University of Lethbridge with a philosophy degree. I am currently studying to write my LSAT to get into law school. I am joining the Citizens’ Assembly because I have had an interest in municipal politics and view this as the perfect opportunity to learn more, as well as to have influence within our local government.

Richard Chevrier, South End: I was born in Windsor, Ontario and employed with the Canadian Armed Forces for 40 years as a personnel selection officer. I have advanced degrees in the field of urban sociology and applied research. I have held a number of volunteer positions with the local Neighbourhood Association, Retired Public Servants Association, and Chinook Country Tourist Association, amongst others.

John Cicman, North End: I was born, raised, and educated in Lethbridge. I served in the Canadian Military and retired in Lethbridge where I have been volunteering for various community organizations.

Alan Efetha, South End: I grew up and attended primary, ordinary, and advanced level schools in Kenya, East Africa. At the age of 20 years, I moved to Canada to attend college in Camrose, Alberta and gain some experience in Canadian farming practices. In 1991, I moved to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to attend the University of Saskatchewan, where I completed a B.Sc. in Agriculture and M.Sc. in Soil Science. I have worked as a soil classifier in northern Saskatchewan, an agricultural applied researcher in the Peace River region of Alberta, an irrigation specialist.
in southern Alberta, and now as an extension specialist for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. I have a wife of 18 years and three kids (one girl and two boys). I am member of the Southern Alberta Afro-Canadian Association, St. Augustine Anglican Church, and Lethbridge Community Garden Association. In the past, I was involved with coaching for the Lethbridge Soccer Association. I love sports, outdoors, gardening, and coaching soccer.

**Twyla Ellis, West End:** I have lived in Lethbridge since moving here to attend university in 2001, where I received my B.Sc. in 2006 and M.Sc. in 2010. I am now a stay-at-home mom with two children, ages four and one and a half. I have always had an interest in the political process, so I am excited to learn more about municipal government as a part of the Citizens’ Assembly.

**Sharon Fath, West End:** I was born in Los Angeles, CA and grew up in Redding, CA, moving to southern Alberta for high school. I have lived here for around 45 years. My husband’s name is Wayne, and I have two sons who are grown up so I am waiting for grandchildren one day. I have had many full- and part-time jobs over the years but my most important job was being a mother of my two boys. I have worked at banks and in offices doing a variety of different jobs (e.g., customs broker, teller, and accounts receivable and other accounting jobs). Most recently, I worked at the Blast program and enjoyed working with children at the after-school programs. As I got older, I took some time off to retire early and seem to be busy as ever with my garden and big yard. Lethbridge is a great place to live; I would like to keep it that way. I am thankful for this chance to help out and see how things get done for the progress of the city.

**Jody Filkowski, North End:** I am from Lethbridge and have spent the last 15 years working in scientific research. My quest for life-long learning has motivated me to participate in this Citizens’ Assembly as I believe it will offer a unique opportunity to gain knowledge on the inner workings of municipal governments. I look forward to hearing the opinions, thoughts, and concerns of other citizens on the potential reorganization of Lethbridge City Council commitment levels.

**James Fox, North End:** I grew up in a small town in southern Alberta. After high school, I became a heavy duty mechanic and worked for Finning Canada Ltd. for 41 years, retiring a year and a half ago. My family and I have lived in Lethbridge for 42 years. In my spare time, I enjoy golfing and hunting. I chose to participate in the Citizens’ Assembly because I like to have insight into what’s going on in Lethbridge.

**Nathan Fuehrer, West End:** I grew up in Huron, South Dakota and moved to Lethbridge seven years ago. I’ve been a Lutheran pastor for my entire tenure here. I enjoy teaching God’s Word to people and giving them peace and hope in His promises. I have a wife and four children, the
youngest due in March. I have undergraduate degrees in political science and in speech communication, and attended law school for two years before withdrawing to pursue a Master’s of Divinity. I joined the Citizens’ Assembly because I would like to learn more about how our community is governed and hopefully become a better citizen.

Connor Gustafson, North End: My family comes from a little town in the west Kootenays of BC. I’ve lived in Lethbridge for a year now as a student at the University of Lethbridge. I’m a neuroscience major heading into my fourth year of studies. I’m also a member of the Lethbridge Astronomy Society. I hope that with my science background and eagerness to learn more about the municipal process in Lethbridge, I might be able to contribute to my new community in a positive way.

Shauna Henderson, South End: I have lived in Lethbridge all of my life and am the mother to two grown kids. My hobbies include walking, quilting, and reading great fiction. I decided to volunteer for the Citizens’ Assembly because I felt it was my civic duty to do so.

Lynn Hurkens, West End: I was born in Edmonton. My father’s work brought us to Lethbridge in 1954 and, except for three years, I have been here since. I am a widow. My husband died three years ago. I have four children, and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I worked at various places, including the City of Lethbridge. I am now retired. I like to keep up with what’s happening in my community.

Roslyn Kelln, South End: I grew up in southern Alberta and have lived in Lethbridge most of my adult life. I was the Executive Secretary for Canbra Foods for 15 years. My husband and I then started our own accounting practice in 1987. We sold our practice in 2007, and I am now semi-retired. I occasionally work for Moriyama Wolsey, Chartered Accountants, hopefully to keep my head fresh by working in the numbers business. I love to travel, mostly cruising, and I always have my nose in a book. By being on the Citizens’ Assembly, I hope to gain more knowledge about our city and what our councillors’ jobs entail.

Carma Leishman, West End: I have lived in southern Alberta for most of my life and have been a resident of Lethbridge for over 20 years. I have a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Management from the University of Lethbridge, as well as two co-operative education work terms (one of which led to a published article in the International Journal of Computer Mathematics). I worked for the University of Lethbridge and was the Manager of National Recruitment for several years before deciding to stay at home with my three wonderful children. I am now the Marketing and Brand Developer for Greenline Media: a home-based design and videography company. With my background in business and technology, my love of the City, and my desire to do what is in the best interest of my fellow citizens, I will do my best to carefully consider all the facts and
provide a voice that will echo the sentiments of other Lethbridge residents while still holding true to what I believe is right.

**Kimberly Lyall, North End:** I am a motivational speaker, instructor, and project manager who has lived in Lethbridge all my life. In addition to speaking at conferences across North America, I currently instruct and facilitate programs for Lethbridge College Corporate and Continuing Education, and manage a variety of projects for local organizations. My passion is empowering people to believe in their capabilities. Most of my career and volunteer efforts have been aimed at building strong communities and creating new opportunities, and as such I’ve worked with associations worldwide in the areas of leadership, community development, tourism, and marketing. My decades of management experience include project manager of the award-winning Coyote Flats Oral History Project, CEO of Chinook Country Tourist Association, and director of the Lions International Youth Leadership Camp. As a passionate advocate for effective leadership and good governance, I believe the Citizens’ Assembly provides a unique approach to encouraging broad-based input.

**Tracy Matheson, North End:** I am from the City of Sydney, on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. In 1998, I made the decision to try and escape the economic depression of my beautiful province and I moved to High River, Alberta. I wanted to continue my education and become a nurse. In 2002, after researching the best nursing programs in Canada and Alberta, I decided to move to Lethbridge. Unfortunately, my health kept me from continuing to work and attend classes. Currently, I work at Safeway as a grocery clerk. I am active in my union (UFCW Local 401) as a shop steward and I was recently elected as a vice-president on our executive board. My husband Shawn and I volunteer for The Last Chance Cat Ranch and we have three beautiful Russian Donskoy cats, whom we consider children. I am a proud resident of Lethbridge and I have seen it change and grow over the past 14 years. I am excited to be a part of the Citizens’ Assembly and I am confident that our varied backgrounds and experiences will help us to give voice to the concerns and ideas for our fellow Lethbridge residents.

**Michael Medhurs, West End:** I am the eldest of four kids born and raised in Calgary in a bilingual household. I hold a Bachelor of Political Science and Economics from the University of Calgary. My wife Sue and I have been married for 14 years and have two children aged 13 and nine. I am the manager of the Lethbridge branch of a family-owned wholesale distribution company based out of Calgary. I enjoy being one of the coaches for our daughter’s lacrosse teams, attending both kids’ extracurricular activities, travelling with my wife, and relaxing with my dog. I applied to be a member of this group because I appreciate the opportunity to be informed and consulted in matters of civic governance.
Jozef Mielcarek, *West End:* I was born in 1950 in Poland. I completed university in Warsaw in 1975 in water-related construction, irrigation, and drainage. I came to Canada in 1982 and worked for almost 30 years for several companies including Lethbridge Beverly, the City of Lethbridge, and the Green Acres Foundation. I am now very happily retired, busy enjoying my life, family, and friends.

Eric Mikus, *South End:* I moved to Lethbridge in 1979 from White River Ontario, where I was raised and worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Upon arrival, I joined the laborers’ union, eventually working at a hospital, and then a concrete finishing company where I worked on and off for years pouring floors on numerous jobs including the five phases of the University of Lethbridge, Safeway, Park Place Mall, seniors’ homes, housing projects, and many other local institutions. During time off in the winters, I built houses and put up structural steel buildings at local colleges, the old Beaver Lumber, and many agricultural buildings. I got seriously hurt while building a hair salon in Raymond and seven surgeries later I am on disability, still living here with my wife of eight years.

Wilma Mulder, *North End:* I immigrated to Canada 40 years ago and have lived in Lethbridge about 35 of those years. I am an accountant by trade, but due to my disability I’m not able to work in the field. Almost four years ago, I discovered quilting and now I’m addicted. The day people from Fort McMurray were evacuated, two other women and I started a Facebook group with the purpose of collecting quilts for these folks. To date, the project has seen over 7,000 quilts handed out and it is still ongoing. I strongly feel that God placed me on this world to help people and animals, and as such volunteer my time whenever I can; and, I’m owned by five cats.

Cameron Murray, *South End:* I grew up in the small community of Marwayne, Alberta located about 48 km northwest of Lloydminster, Alberta/Saskatchewan. I moved to Lethbridge about four years ago to get a fresh start and to get a chance to learn a few things about myself in the process. While in Lethbridge I have taken up dragon boating, which has been a lot of fun. I’m looking to become a more productive member of the community. I always like to learn and look forward to the opportunity to learn and be part of the deliberations on Lethbridge City Council’s role in our community.

Kim Ordway, *North End:* I moved to Lethbridge for post-secondary school over 20 years ago, and loved the city so much I never left. I have worked in public sector administration for most of my career and feel privileged to serve the community on a daily basis. I joined the Citizens’ Assembly because I feel it is important to ensure those who volunteer their time to make decisions for our community on behalf of the citizens are treated fairly, with reasonable expectations placed on them for time commitment and compensation.
Arlene Purcell, South End: I have lived and worked in the Lethbridge area for thirty-five years, and have called Alberta home all my life. Having retired from teaching, I am fortunate to now work with aspiring teachers through the University of Lethbridge Teacher Education Program. Lethbridge has given much joy and opportunity to me and to my family over the years, and I am excited to be able to learn more about, and contribute to, my city through the Citizens’ Assembly.

Suzanne Ramsey-Green, West End. —

Sam Richards, South End: I was born and raised in Lethbridge. I grew up on the north side through my grade school years. Just before moving away to pursue a post-secondary education, a girl named Renee caught my eye, stole my heart and we married nearly 16 years ago. We left Lethbridge to obtain two degrees; I have both a Bachelor and a Master of Civil Engineering degree. When we returned to Lethbridge, we settled in a house on the south side of the city. We’re still there and have no plans to move. We have four children; three girls and a boy. They are fantastic! I recently opened my own engineering company: Sigma Rho Squared Engineering. I am a consulting structural engineer and provide services to agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential clientele. Our company motto is “Design. Build. Community.” We are hoping to be able to give back to the community that has been so supportive of us. I am also the president of the Lethbridge Skateboard Association, which I have been a part of for five years. I enjoy life: indoors, outdoors, relaxing, and racing, being on the prairies, in the mountains, or swimming in the ocean. I try to find humor wherever I can because laughing is good for the soul.

Kim Sievert, South End: I grew up in inner-city Regina and spent my coming of age years in suburban Vancouver. Since moving to Lethbridge in 1998, I have served on over two dozen boards and committees. I graduated from Lethbridge College and the University of Lethbridge. I live near downtown with my spouse of 21 years and our 6 children. I manage a marketing company, specializing in writing, editing, and social media.

Lynda Spenceley, South End: My husband and I moved here with our two sons 43 years ago when he was asked to be a consultant for a plastic company, which we later bought. I owned a hairstyling business and at one time employed 15 stylists. Now, we are both retired and our son runs the plastic business, and I sold my business. I love living in Lethbridge and am interested in how the Citizens’ Assembly can be helpful in making decisions on public issues.

Derek St. Jean, West End: I was born and raised in Lethbridge, Alberta. I’m entering the fifth year of my Bachelor of Political Science and Psychology. I also volunteer as much as I can, and in various ways within
Lethbridge. I’m the current serving chair of the Youth Advisory Council, and have a strong background in youth volunteering in Lethbridge. My passions are for my community and the potential it holds.

**Dawn Sugimoto, South End:** Born and raised in southern Alberta, I spent 20 years in journalism at the Lethbridge Herald, giving me opportunity to explore my interests in health care, local history, and politics. Since 2009, I have worked in public education communications.

**Lawrence Unser, West End:** I was born in Brooks, Alberta, grew up on a farm, and went to school in Rolling Hills, Alberta. I worked on a ranch in Pincher Creek for about a year, then moved to Lethbridge, and have lived here ever since. I worked for a plumbing contractor for 24 years and in 1990 I started working for the City of Lethbridge as a maintenance plumber. In 1993, I moved to the Inspection Department and retired from the position of Senior Mechanical Inspector on July 15, 2016. In 2011, I received a Parliamentary appointment to become a member of the Safety Codes Council in the capacity of a Gas Sub-council member. In 2013, I became the chair of the Gas Sub-council, a position I reluctantly had to resign from when I retired. I hope to keep busy and active by participating in initiatives such as this, and by volunteering.

**Zachary Wigand, North End:** I have lived in Lethbridge my whole life. I am going to college to study business administration with a major in management. I have extensive volunteer experience with community organizations including the Canadian Red Cross and Volunteer Lethbridge. Through these community organizations, I have completed over 1,000 volunteer hours in the past two years.

**Nicola Wood, West End:** Transplanted from Victoria (Trees! Rocks! Ocean!) when I was younger, I grew up here and eventually acclimatized. I even like the wind now. I attended both the college and the university here before graduating as a nurse. Currently, I teach first aid on a part-time basis, and run a fairly geeky household where I try to encourage my children to be involved and interested in the world around them. Being involved with the Citizens’ Assembly was an off-shoot of this desire.
The Assembly Sessions:

SESSION ONE, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2016

On the first morning, Assembly staff welcomed members as they arrived. Each member received a course pack containing background readings and information about the program. Each member was also asked to sign a “Public Service Pledge,” affirming their commitment to work diligently on behalf of all Lethbridge citizens.

The day began with an official welcome from Mayor Spearman and City Clerk Aleta Neufeld who each thanked the participants for their generosity in volunteering to serve the City and its residents. Assembly members then spread out across the foyer of City Hall standing in rough proximity to one another as they pretended the room was a giant map of the city. As they introduced themselves, they also shared their reasons for volunteering.

Next, Jonathan Rose, a member of the facilitation team and professor of political science, provided an introduction to the work of municipal government. Rose’s presentation helped to orient Assembly members to the work and responsibilities of municipal government, its relationship to other orders of government, and its evolution as a provider of various human services and infrastructure. He explained that municipal government operates in a space defined by the province. Consequently, each order of government has different responsibilities and tax powers. He also explained the important differences between parliamentary and council government.

Next, Ian McCormack, an expert in municipal administration in Alberta, presented a detailed explanation of the function of City Council and the role of elected Councillors. McCormick provided an overview of the process of registering as a candidate for election, the campaign period and its restrictions, the orientation process for new Councillors, and the rights and responsibilities of their office. McCormick also discussed the evolution of their role and workload. He reviewed a typical legislative calendar, and explained the four-year budget process. He described the relationship between Mayor and Council, and between Council and the municipal administration. Finally, he reviewed similar jurisdictions in western Canada which have comparable populations and either full and part-time council representation, describing the respective advantages of both approaches.

Following lunch, the moderator introduced the Mayor and five members of Council who had agreed to participate in a sixty-minute question and answer session with the Assembly.

The members spent the final ninety minutes of their first day discussing what they had learned and identifying a list of potential values to guide their thinking on effective local government.
SESSION TWO, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2016

Assembly members began their second day by sharing their experience of the first session and describing conversations they had had during the two week break with family, colleagues and friends. One member reported that he had reached out and spoken with more than 70 Lethbridge residents. The first presentation of the day was made by Shari-Anne Doolaege, an expert on municipal government in Western Canada who explained some of the differences between elected councils in similarly-sized municipalities in Alberta.

Doolaege was careful to observe that there is no right system. Instead municipalities evolve differently and make different governance choices that hopefully reflect the public interest.

Following Doolaege’s presentation, the Assembly returned to their discussion concerning values and ultimately settled on six which would help to shape their thinking and priorities for any potential reforms.

Next, the members reviewed diagrams provided by several councillors concerning their activities in a typical week. The members then created their own diagrams illustrating how they each believed councillors should spend their time. The members then circulated amongst one another looking for other members with with similar diagrams. This allowed the Assembly to divide itself into five working groups each tasked with considering the implications of their time allocations.

The day concluded with a presentation by Chris Lastiwka, a compensation consultant with the City of Lethbridge. Lastiwka explained how Councillors in Lethbridge and five comparable municipalities are paid. Lastiwka was careful to point out that there are many different ways of determining appropriate compensation. He then reviewed the formula used by the City of Lethbridge to calculate and periodically amend the salary and benefits of Councillors.

PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE MEETING

On October 6, 2016 more than 50 Lethbridge residents attended a public roundtable meeting at City Hall to learn about the work of the Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly and contribute their perspectives.

The moderator provided an overview of what the Assembly had learned during its first two days. He described the roles and responsibilities of Councillors, their current compensation, and the compensation levels in comparable jurisdictions in Alberta. Working in small groups hosted by members of the Assembly, residents were asked to discuss and record their answers to four questions:

1. What do you value in local representatives?
2. How should Councillors spend their time?
3. What are the possible benefits and drawbacks of electing part-time Councillors?
4. What are the possible benefits and drawbacks of electing full-time Councillors?
Many attendees reported a strong aversion to increasing either the pay or time afforded to Councillors to perform their duties. Others expressed concern about the rate at which compensation has increased for Councillors over the past decade.

A few participants argued differently, believing that increasing the paid time of Councillors would be of benefit to the city and its residents. They urged the Assembly to recognize that many Councillors already work the equivalent of full-time hours which go uncompensated.

Regardless of their views, however many people voiced their appreciation to the volunteers who made up the Assembly and wished them well in their deliberations.

_A summary of the input from citizens who attended the Public Roundtable is included as Appendix A._

**SESSION THREE, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2016**

The Assembly spent its final day considering different employment and compensation scenarios with each group taking turns presenting their best ideas and preferred options. The moderator led a vigorous plenary discussion and challenged the members to work towards common ground. Gradually a consensus began to emerge with a strong majority of members preferring to maintain or only minimally increase the paid hours and salary of Councillors. With this direction established, the Assembly broke into new working groups to discuss the introduction to the report and its recommendations concerning employment, compensation as well as additional considerations.

Each group drafted their section, shared it during a plenary session, and then incorporated the feedback provided by other members. This iterative process which continued through the afternoon helped to ensure that all members could broadly support the Assembly’s conclusions.

In its final hour, several Councillors arrived to hear the members read out their draft report. One-by-one representatives from each group took turns at the podium to present their section of the report. The moderator then asked for a show of hands to formally endorse the Assembly’s recommendations and send them to Council. This vote carried unanimously.

Before the Assembly was adjourned, the members were reminded that they would have several weeks to make minor edits to the report online, and to contribute their own personal perspective in a ‘minority report’. Members could use their minority report to highlight any agreements or disagreements with the Assembly’s recommendations or to document any concerns with the process.

City Clerk Aleta Neufeld then closed the Assembly, thanking the members for their dedication and presenting each with a framed certificate in appreciation of their public service.
Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly Members’ Report

INTRODUCTION

The Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly was a representative group of Lethbridge citizens tasked with understanding the roles and responsibilities of Lethbridge City Councillors and making a recommendation on their employment and compensation. Citizen Assemblies are deliberative processes that provide volunteers with the time, information, and perspectives required to make informed recommendations on complex issues. Though the Assembly could not include all citizens of Lethbridge directly, every effort was made by its members to represent the different views and concerns of the city’s residents.

The members of the Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly were randomly selected, and we believe we fairly represented all Lethbridge residents both demographically and geographically. We accepted the invitation to participate for many reasons. These included: a sense of civic duty, a chance to learn, and the opportunity to express our voice, to serve, and to represent the community. Many members also volunteered because they are interested in municipal government and were curious about the idea of a Citizens’ Assembly, which is new to Lethbridge.

Shortly after we met on our first day, we discussed different values that we believe are core to the role played by our Councillors. We started by identifying the values most important to each of us individually. Then, we consolidated and refined these values in small groups before sharing them with all members of the Assembly. The commonalities we saw between the groups were reassuring, and soon we settled on a single list of values. We hope these values will help the readers of this report to understand the foundation for our priorities and recommendations.

“Our system of local government should ensure that elected representatives are...”

Committed to our community

...and are able to promote, articulate, and exemplify what brings us together as Lethbridge citizens, and that they are able to see the big picture and want to help all people in our community. Together they foster a sense of unity, belonging, and respect. We believe it’s important that Lethbridge City Councillors bring passion to their work and think of it as more than a career.
Open-minded

...exemplifying inclusiveness and flexibility. Councillors do this by actively educating themselves from reputable sources while maintaining a close connection with their community. Additionally, Councillors are mindful of their preferences and biases and consider the different views of community members.

Accountable

...able to demonstrate accountability first to their fellow citizens, and second to each other, through their actions, use of their time, and decisions. Lethbridge residents should know that Councillors, individually and collectively, are fulfilling their responsibilities.

Inclusive

...and responsive to the cultural, social, and economic background of the community and reflective of the diverse nature of Lethbridge. Councillors should work to encourage more participation.

Good value

...possessing a strong understanding of the scope of their responsibilities, and able to prioritize their time to activities related to their core purpose. It is imperative they are fiscally and temporally responsible in their stewardship of public resources and continually strive to be efficient and accountable in fulfilling their role and in managing their time.

Visionary

...innovative and courageous, allowing them to make decisions, even if they are unpopular, that balance forward-thinking and traditional values to move the City towards implementing the community’s shared vision.

Over the course of our deliberations, and mindful of the concerns expressed by residents during our public roundtable meeting, we concluded that Councillors can meet their core responsibilities by prioritizing their activities carefully. We recognize that this can be difficult especially when balancing competing demands to become better informed by researching issues, attending committee and Council meetings, and responding to constituent needs. However, if Councillors prioritize their time appropriately and well, we are confident they can serve the City successfully now and into the future.

Repeatedly we returned to the idea that Councillors must balance their sense of vocation and choice of occupation. We think it is important to differentiate between elected responsibilities and a desire to give more, and to give back, to their communities. We are also careful to observe that Council’s role is governance and not to stray into administrative matters which we worry full-time employment might encourage.
Recommendations Concerning Employment:
We reached consensus concerning these recommendations having reviewed the current employment and compensation practices in comparable cities in Western Canada, and having considered increases to Councillor pay in Lethbridge over the past two decades.

1. City councillors are elected to create and implement a long-term vision. Their primary role is governance. This governance function includes, but is not limited to, attending committee and Council meetings, representing constituents, setting a strategic plan and budget, and providing oversight of city policies.

As good stewards of public resources and with a Council of eight members and a full-time Mayor, we believe these responsibilities can be accomplished within the current allocation of 25-30 hours each week.

The role of an elected Councillor is part vocation, part occupation. Vocation is a sense of public calling and civic-mindedness, voluntarism, public-spiritedness, and altruism. It recognizes that Councillors may often go over and above the requirements of their elected role.

2. We believe that Councillors can meet their responsibilities by working efficiently and prioritizing well. We also recognize that this will in part require managing or resetting the expectations of citizens themselves who often expect immediate service from Councillors. We think Councillors should turn to city staff to help manage more of these requests.

3. We also believe that while some activities undertaken by Councillors are important, they are effectively optional or voluntary. Councillors receive many requests to participate in worthwhile community events that make Lethbridge a more liveable and vibrant city. Nevertheless, we believe that a Councillor’s core governance responsibilities should take priority. The majority of community events attended by Councillors should be undertaken on their own time, leaving the Mayor or his or her designate to represent the city when necessary. We believe this is appropriate as the Mayor is a full-time member of Council and is the symbolic head of Council.

Recommendations Concerning Compensation:
Currently, the compensation for elected Councillors in Lethbridge in 2016 includes a base salary of $29,479 per year, with an unvouchered or tax-free allowance of $14,739 per year ($44,218 total). In addition, Councillors have an approved out of city per diem of $200 per day or $100 per half-day (travel budget of $10,000 annually). Benefits include:

- Group life insurance (paid by the Council Member);
- Accidental death and dismemberment insurance (paid by the Council Member); and
- Extended health and dental insurance and Flex Spending/Health Spending Account (paid by the City).
4. We believe the current remuneration and benefits package provides appropriate compensation commensurate with the responsibilities of Councillors. Salaries and benefits paid to Lethbridge Councillors are consistent with the compensation levels paid in other jurisdictions of comparable size as evidenced by the City’s own Alberta-based biennial market review and a recent study from the City of Saskatoon.

5. However, we urge Council to consider two adjustments to the formula used for determining compensation.

5a. First, we recommend the frequency of the ‘comparable city market review’ be changed from a biennial review to a quadrennial review, establishing revised compensation levels in the final year of a Council term to take effect at the start of a new term of Council. This will help to insulate Councillors from any accusation that they are voting in their own self-interest given that there is no guarantee they would be re-elected to Council.

5b. Second, we recommend removing Wood Buffalo and Grande Prairie—two cities closely tied to the oil and gas industry where living costs may be higher—from the basket of cities used in the biennial review formula and instead to include similarly sized cities across Western Canada with more comparable agrarian economies. As it is currently designed, the market survey may inadvertently fuel salary increases among unequal economic players.

6. We recommend maintaining the current system of per diems, expense allowances, and other benefits.

**Additional Recommendations:**
In light of our conclusions, we urge Council to also consider the following:

- Evaluate whether Councillors have appropriate technological and staffing support, and consider how Council’s administrative assistant can be better used to support Councillors in communicating with constituents;
- Increase the use of City staff to prepare independent studies and reviews, and determine whether Council should employ as many as two part-time researchers to support Council decision-making;
- Increase professional development opportunities to support Councillors to work efficiently and effectively;
- Develop a clear and comprehensive job description for Lethbridge Councillors that provides far greater detail than the Municipal Government Act. This document should outline a Councillor’s priorities, functions, and responsibilities;
• Publish an annual accountability report that describes the collective achievements of Council and its members;

• Communicate more actively with the public to build awareness of Council’s activities;

• Although we acknowledge that it falls outside our mandate, we think it is important to advise Council that the idea of implementing a ward system in Lethbridge was met with strong interest and support. We believe this would help to ensure more equitable and direct representation from the City’s three principal neighbourhoods, and could increase political responsiveness and accountability. As such, we urge City Council to consider the implications of a ward system, sometime before the 2021 election; and

• Finally, we recommend deferring any subsequent review of Councillor employment and compensation for 15 years, or until the population reaches 150,000, whichever is to come first.
APPENDIX A - PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE NOTES

Q1. What do you value in local representatives?
• Have common sense
• Fiscal responsibility
• Direct administration (not be directed by administration)
• Balanced
• Knowledgeable/informed
• Qualified to do the job/hirable
• Understand their role (blurred line between provincial government and with administration)
• Visionary
• Willing to take a stand
• Informed
• Honesty
• Intelligence
• Flexible
• Life experience – diverse skill sets/thoughts/opinions
• People skills – ability to listen
• Open-mindedness
• Responsive to their constituents/represent values of constituents
• Work hard
• Accountability
• Transparency
• Accessibility
• Diversity – skill set/geography
• Committed to entire city
• Proactive
• Assertive
• Good time management skills
• Innovative
• Long-term view
• Progressive
• Advocate for people and businesses
• Trustworthy

Q2. How should Councillors spend their time?
• Mandatory tasks – prep for/attend council meetings; committee meetings; preparation and research; understanding the issue
• Economic development – growth
• Oversee management of the city & knowledgeable about city processes
– nose in, fingers out
- Town hall meetings to solicit community input (with option to pass work on to administration)
- Represent city at different functions
- Network with other municipalities & intergovernmental relations
- Professional development
- Report to community on how time spent
- Linking people to administration – “being the bridge”
- Timely communication with constituents
- Financial oversight
- Quality engagement

Q3. What are the possible benefits and drawbacks of electing part-time Councillors?

Benefits
- Altruism – not just in it for the money
- Fiscally responsible
- Focuses work on highest value tasks (efficiency)
- Bigger applicant pool
- Diversity of viewpoints/backgrounds
- Lower salary costs
- Historical approach
- Status quo is working
- May be more organized and effective
- Works for this size of a city

Drawbacks
- Limited availability (balancing their commitments to their other job)
- Not as focused
- Not enough time to do research = unprepared councillors
- More likely to attract retired people (less age diversity, less diversity in backgrounds)
- Constantly “on”, even though paid part-time
- If hold a p/t job, have less time for council work
- Potential conflict of interest
- Financial stress

Q4. What are the possible benefits and drawbacks of electing full-time Councillors?

Benefits
- More time to connect with citizens
- More devotion to the job
- Better community involvement
- Attract a diversity of people
- More time = better value
- Getting paid for the time they put in
- Could enable more diverse ideas at the table (more diverse people running?)
• Less conflict of interest

Drawbacks
• Low accountability for time spent – would citizens get twice as much value?
• “Looks like employment” – pension, vacation, etc.
• May need more support staff
• Limited applicant pool – people would have to leave their jobs
• Costs more (pensions, health benefits, severance, more assistants, vacation pay)
• Attracts career politicians
• Increased demands on administration

APPENDIX B: MINORITY REPORTS
Cameron Murray
I believe the six values we developed are a good start and will give you some depth to what we saw and what you should see in your positions. Just as we had many reasons for being on the Citizens' Assembly, like civic duty and learning, I hope Council will see this document and its supporting material as a learning opportunity. And with the statement 'Repeatedly we returned to the idea that Councillors must balance their sense of vocation and choice of occupation' reminds me that part of being in office has a civic duty to it and those wanting to play a part in the development of this city, province or country must see that as a main reason to promote your fellow citizens as a whole over yourself.

With regards to the compensation of the Councillors I had another Idea about the numbers but really liked the talk about the COLA and the development of a quadrennial review. As to our additional recommendations, I feel that allocating funds to have two researchers available to Council would really help the function of the Council and that a plain language document outlining Councillors’ functions — a job description — would help in many ways and also help many people understand what it is that you do.

However, I would also like to recommend that Lethbridge consider adopting an ‘Extended Hybrid’ model — which I think could work very well in Lethbridge. This system would include a full-time Mayor (50-65 hrs/week), four full-time Councillors (36-44 hrs/week) and four part-time Councillors (16-24 hrs/week). The average hours for full-time employment is 40 hrs/week and the average for part time is 20 hrs/week and with an equal number of full and part time Councillors, then as now the average for all Councillors would remain about 30 hours/week. I would also recommend that the role of Deputy Mayor be shared among the four full time Councillors who would alternate quarterly and be paid for their additional responsibilities.
**Recommended compensation:**

**Mayor** 50-65 hours   Recommended: $80,000 taxable and $40,000 unvouchered allowance for a total salary of $120,000; presently paid $115,665

**Deputy Mayor**  Recommended: ½ Mayor’s pay divided among four Councillors each serving quarterly; $3,333.33 taxable and $1,666.67 unvouchered allowance

**Four F/T Councillors** 36-44 hours   Recommended ½ Mayor’s pay $40,000 taxable and $20,000 unvouchered allowance for a total salary of $60,000

**Four P/T Councillors** 16-24 hours/w   Recommended ¼ Mayor’s pay $20,000 taxable and $10,000 unvouchered allowance for a total salary of $30,000: Eight part-time councillors are presently paid $44,218

Full-time councillors would have more responsibilities than part-time Councillors including acting as Deputy Mayor position and attending more committee meetings. The voting weight of full and part time Councillors would be equal.

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<tr>
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<th>‘Current pay’</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
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I feel that this ‘Extended Hybrid’ will help those that want to assume an increased role and as well as those just starting out in municipal politics. I feel that this model reflects the basic and overall outcome of the ‘Lethbridge Citizens’ Assembly’ with the average hours worked at 30 hours/week and the base salaries increased in total by only $30,591.

I do want to thank all those involved in this process from the organization on the MASS team, my fellow Assembly members and their feedback and ears as well as the many citizens of the City of Lethbridge who I spoke with during the public roundtable meeting and in the community.