



♀ ST. JOHN'S WOMEN'S CENTRE
♀ MARGUERITE'S PLACE
♀ SAFE HARBOUR OUTREACH PROJECT

170 Cashin Ave. Ext., St. John's, NL Canada A1E 3B6 | T. 709.753.0220 | F. 709.753.3817 | www.sjwomenscentre.ca

CALLING ALL CANDIDATES

Feminist Q&A with municipal election candidates

3. Gender-based violence happens at epidemic rates in our communities. What action-oriented work can be taken on by the City to meaningfully address this crisis?

MAYOR (acclaimed)

Danny Breen - No response.

DEPUTY MAYOR (acclaimed)

Sheilagh O'Leary - Gender based violence is an epidemic. As former Co-Chair Equal Voice NL, I believe strong female representation helps ensure necessary advocacy for women and families. Diverse representation on City Council is an important first step to address systemic issues contributing to gender-based violence including poverty, a living wage, rent control and education. As Chair of MNL Women's Caucus and having a strong working relationship with organizations like SJWC, Equal Voice NL, and MNL, I will continue a partnered approach to lobby the province for these issues which fall under their jurisdiction.

AT LARGE

Maggie Burton - Gender-based violence can and must be addressed by all levels of government. My priorities are improving affordable housing options, improving transportation infrastructure and funding frontline service providers like the SJSWC. When women and gender-diverse people experience gender-based violence, they are put in a vulnerable and precarious position. A shortage of affordable housing and of accessible transportation options exacerbates this vulnerability, making it more difficult for people to avoid or escape personal or professional relationships marked by

gender-based violence. Ultimately, a systemic, cross-governmental, trauma-informed approach is needed to address this epidemic.

Tom Davis - My wife, Bev Moore Davis, and I have pushed governments at all levels to recognize child abuse and the damage it does short and long term. Girls suffer disproportionately. I have been in rooms filled with people of authority who fail to see the urgency and that action must be taken immediately. I spoke passionately and directly at the time and if elected I will work to have child abuse prevention as a primary focus of our city. This same sense of urgency will be applied to all gender based violence.

Ron Ellsworth - We must identify any existing barriers that would prevent those experiencing Gender based violence from accessing services that the City provides and take all actions to eliminate those barriers. We also need to review policies and programs to ensure that they are not inadvertently jeopardizing people who take action to protect themselves from gender-based violence. The city and its councillors are often on the front line of our community's needs, and have a grassroots understanding of these issues. Our councillors must lobby other levels of government to take all measures within their power to address this epidemic through social, justice and health programs and services.

Debbie Hanlon - There is no excuse for violence and abuse. Having experienced this first-hand, it will always be something that is profoundly important to me. Access to information lines is critically important. We need to ensure that people are aware of resources that are immediately available during a crisis and of resources that are available on an ongoing supportive basis. Vital to our role on Council is to engage and work with the many groups and organizations in our community that provide supports to people experiencing gender based violence and any other crisis. We also need to continue our work with groups and partners to prioritize funding and support.

Sandy Hickman - This concern crosses all jurisdictions. The City and all people need to be aware to respect each other. This is an attitudinal problem that seems to prevail these days that everyone has to work to overcome. The City has always supported any group or organization that speaks to concerns of gender-based violence. I feel we must continue to do this and continue to speak out about this ourselves. Again, I take my lead from those more in tune than I and have always been impressed by my colleagues in this regard.

Meghan Hollett - The City's proximity to people and its impact on our daily lives provides significant opportunities to take action to address gender-based violence in our communities. This work can include: establishing a City Advisory Group on

Gender-Based Violence; supporting the SJSOWC call for a provincial task force; city services and public transit that are safe and accessible; housing that is safe and affordable; engagement that is transparent and builds trust with communities. We know our communities aren't made safer by surveillance or punitive laws. We must advocate for sustainable institutional change at all levels that supports survivors and eliminates violence in all its forms.

Mark House - We must increase the creation of safe spaces for children. Children who have been exposed to violence and trauma is linked to men's violence against intimate partners. We must break this cycle by providing ways for children to grow in a secure environment. We must encourage children to break free from harmful stereotypes. Parents, educators, coaches, and policy makers all have a role to play in challenging the belief that for boys and men, violence is normal. We need to seek opportunities to listen to women's stories and acknowledge their experiences to become informed. We must find ways to donate, fund, and support women's organizations and anti-violence services.

Anne Malone - Divert funding away from police and fund mobile units of professionals with specialized training in trauma, mental health interventions, and conflict resolution and violence prevention and response. Work with organizations and Dept. Of Justice to create mechanisms to monitor and enforce restraining orders and other protections. Create and fund shelters to the full extent of the need of these resources in the city.

Jess Puddister - It's important to have a council that recognizes gender-based violence as an epidemic with significant and serious effects within our communities. While many aspects of our health, justice, and social services are administered by the province, the City needs to do its part and to help advocate on behalf of survivors. Working with community organizations and partners, such as the Status of Women Council and Women's Centre, is an essential part of that—as well as recognizing the policy, budget, and programming choices the city can make on solution-building. I see housing as a key part of this work.

Paul Combden - No response.

Steve Parsons - No response.

Raymond Petten - No response.

Greg Smith - No response.

WARD 1

Jill Bruce - Gender based violence actions require a multiple pronged approach. Education within the school systems is needed, as is a campaign to adults to look at what is violence. It's not only the homicides, it's the cat calling and microaggressions that are seen as okay in our communities. Working with police service and the public to educate them on GBV is needed. To effectively start the process to stop GBV, we need to call it out, educate people, and provide training for those working in every facet of society. It is important that Councillors are advocates for safe communities and are always listening and learning from those in the communities.

Mark Nichols - First and foremost, the City needs to expand the number of non-profit housing units for survivors of GBV who do not qualify for NL Housing but cannot afford market-based rental accommodation. The City needs to lobby for federal/provincial funding to increase our capacity. It is critically important to make it as seamless as possible for survivors of GBV to have an affordable and safe place to call home, and the City must work with organizations like Kirby House, Home Again Furniture Bank, and the SJSOWC to make this a reality.

Jenn Deon - No response.

WARD 2

Art Puddister - The city needs to support the police to stop GBV also the city needs to fund groups that can stop GBV.

Ophelia Ravencroft - Beyond broadly ensuring Council's commitment to, and knowledge of, feminist principles, foregrounding equity is the necessary first step in violence prevention. Standing with survivors of GBV means building an infrastructure that empowers them to identify, and easily access, support and safety in their community. That means ensuring the availability of affordable housing and accessible transportation, and it means implementing progressive budgeting policies so vulnerable residents aren't stuck with disproportionate economic difficulty that could disempower them if they need to leave a violent situation. I am a survivor of gender-based violence and know the importance of this work firsthand.

Peter Whittle - Community interventions can address gender norms and attitudes through, for example, the combination of microfinance schemes for those at risk and methods that empower men as partners against gender-based violence. The City can also initiate public awareness campaigns and other interventions delivered via

television, radio, newspapers and social media might be effective for altering attitudes towards gender norms.

Derek Winsor - No response.

WARD 3

Walter Harding - Our Mother was very young when she rescued us from an abusive family situation and raised us all on her own in a time when there were no support mechanism in place like we have today. I was blessed to have a Mother so strong, so loving and so caring that she not only saved us from abuse but also taught us right from wrong. It's very important that the message from the home is very clear and supported by ALL males - you don't ever physically or mentally abuse a female. Full stop. I have lived my life preaching this message my Mother instilled into me.

Greg Noseworthy - The lived experiences of people, and ongoing advocacy work within the community informs my practice and decision-making. As I have in my work with non-profits, I will continue to apply the actions and recommendations of professionals and experts to support survivors of gender-based violence. The city can, and should, undertake a process whereby policies and procedures are designed to speak with, and not for victims/survivors of gender-based violence. This includes policies and practices that include discussing with experts in, and persons who have experienced, gender-based violence, at an infrastructure, development, residential, and accessibility levels generally.

Jamie Korab - No response.

WARD 4 (acclaimed)

Ian Froude - We know that GBV is experienced disproportionately by women, gender-diverse and gender non-conforming individuals, is systemic, and is a crisis that requires the city to take a gendered lens to policies and practices. The key actions the City can take are: support for public transit, safe sidewalks and trails, and cycling infrastructure; support the addition of affordable housing options throughout the City; support for shelters and safe spaces; ensuring city staff who experience gender-based violence are provided the support they need; and continuing to fund the essential organizations in our community providing important supports to those affected by this violence.

WARD 5

Scott Fitzgerald - The city has a duty to help where it can. Things like supporting the creation and operation of shelters is a tangible action. As well, offering community based awareness training to young men could help to break GBV cycles.

Carl Ridgeley - All people have the right to a safe and secure environment. The elimination of violence, including gender-based violence (GBV) requires a comprehensive response including prevention, public education, services and continued enforcement of the law. It is important to increase public awareness, which can positively change attitudes and behaviours towards violence and abuse. Initiatives such as social marketing campaigns, research and data collection, violence prevention training and continued support for community organizations are key. There must also be improved public awareness of programs and services to support victims of violence. This issue is also tied to the affordable housing issue.

Donnie Earle - No response.

Brenda Walsh - No response.

4. Budgetary decision-making often has disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities. What would a feminist municipal budget look like to you?

MAYOR (acclaimed)

Danny Breen - No response.

DEPUTY MAYOR (acclaimed)

Sheilagh O'Leary - A feminist municipal budget would allocate resource to help establish political, economic and social equality. Municipal budgets must be balanced by legislation therefore, we must prioritize issues that impact the city's most marginalized. Since first being elected in 2009, I have been a tireless advocate for environmental stewardship, safe and affordable housing and increased human rights. Having a feminist lens while discussing our limited resources during budget deliberations helps safeguard a broader, more equitable form of representation.

AT LARGE

Maggie Burton - A feminist municipal budget is both process and outcome. The process must acknowledge the burden of the City's inadequate transportation infrastructure, Metrobus funding, and affordable housing programs fall disproportionately on marginalized communities. Then engage with affected communities. In my first term, we have increased engagement and mandatory inclusion of these communities and frontline organizations working with them.

Tom Davis - I recognize that women face barriers that need policy and social leadership to break down. We need to continue to introduce policies on preferential hiring and equal pay. That being said, I believe that compensation at the city needs to be reduced. I will work to use this reduction as an opportunity to rebalance equal pay. These reductions will be made through a lens of reducing areas of city compensation where women are paid less, if there are any, in a manner that creates equality.

Ron Ellsworth - The City of St. John's Budget process must do a better job of assessing the impact of budgetary decisions on women and marginalized communities and factor those considerations into the decision-making process. Improvements to the budget process must begin at the public engagement stage. The City should look at how the procurement process for external products and contracted services can be improved to provide opportunities for businesses lead by women and marginalized people to have opportunities in the products and services supply chain. Furthermore, we need to track and report on progress.

Debbie Hanlon - I support the approach that this past Council took in making fiscal decisions. It is never easy, and always should be approached in a way that is holistic, fiscally responsible, consultative and sensitive to the needs of all residents. It is important to ensure that marginalized communities and the organizations that provide programs receive support to and meet their needs. Further engagement with community organizations is necessary; as is continued work with all levels of government and with community stakeholders, and providing opportunity for deeper consultation. We need to continue to be creative in supporting marginalized groups within our community (such as our implementation of a no fee practice on Metrobus for those under aged 12).

Sandy Hickman - I simply do not know how to answer that as I have always been inclusive in my thinking. The City's role vs provincial and federal government is more of a service role. All services are for all residents whether it be snow clearing, fresh drinking water, recreation, garbage collection, etc. Obviously, our affordable housing program is more in line with that and operates well. This can be added to for sure. Our

recreation program has the REAL program which is a wonderful program that is intended to target families in need.

Meghan Hollett - Budgets are a reflection of our priorities. It is an opportunity to invest in the foundations for economic and social transformation in our city. A feminist municipal budget would systematically integrate a GBA+ analysis into municipal plans and strategies, including action plans on economic development, climate change, planning, universal access, as well as strategies for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, housing, procurement, and citizen engagement. When budgets and fiscal policies are developed through a GBA+ lens, with meaningful consultation with community, we can make informed, transparent and just economic decisions that help us build a more equitable city.

Mark House - I recognize the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women, the gender diverse, indigenous and racialized people. We need to invest more in public services to ensure a more inclusive recovery. We must also advance the efforts in gender equity in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and give more attention to the Care sector including funding for indigenous early learning and child care. We need a more inclusive, sustainable, feminist, and resilient economy that values women's work. There needs to be improvement addressing gender disparities and upgrades to women's shelters, childcare centres, and low-income housing. Non-profit organizations are a lifeline for the marginalized in our community. We must support the important work they do.

Anne Malone - It would recognize that Canadian women (on average) earn 77 cents on every dollar made by men and are less likely to hold jobs that offer pension plans and other benefits, are more likely to be the primary custodian of children in single-parent families, are more at risk of relationship violence, generally live longer, and often out-live their partners. Because of the economic disparity, they are less likely to own a car, may not own their own house, and may experience significant financial distress during childrearing years and in old age. Therefore services like public transit, accessible and affordable housing and public spaces, food security, and mental health and anti-violence interventions/supports are required more often required by women.

Jess Puddister - A feminist municipal budget is intersectional. Budgets need to be approached with an intersectional, feminist lens from the outset if we want to make decisions that support equity, inclusion, and social justice. In practice, that means taking into account the full picture of economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of budgetary choices—rather than looking solely at the dollars-and-cents costs and benefits on the surface. Through meaningful public engagement and human-centred

design, we can build better budgets based on the outcomes we want to see. To me, a feminist municipal budget prioritizes investment in services that meaningfully benefit marginalized communities.

Paul Combden - No response.

Steve Parsons - No response.

Raymond Petten - No response.

Greg Smith - No response.

WARD 1

Jill Bruce - All budgets and policy decisions need to take a moment to reflect on how it affects women and have a gendered based analysis applied to them. A feminist approach means acknowledging that women make up 51% of the population and are affected by the decisions of budget actions. Data analysis needs to include the understanding of women as consumers of products and services in the city. Looking at budgets from an end user lens means women need to be a part of the inputs. Budgets are the drivers of actions and without a GBA feminist approach women are left out of the equation.

Mark Nichols - As a candidate committed to inclusive representation, with an emphasis on marginalized voices, I believe municipal budgets should be subject to GBA+ prior to being tabled before City Council. This approach, which takes account of intersectionality, would ensure the needs of women and other marginalized persons are being equitably addressed based on the range of relevant factors, including economic status. Furthermore, as a *male* member of council, I would advocate for including feminist and marginalized perspectives to the greatest degree possible in the budget preparation process.

Jenn Deon - No response.

WARD 2

Art Puddister - The budget belongs to all citizens.

Ophelia Ravencroft - Feminist budgeting should aim to enable equity for all groups, keeping in mind the intersectional realities of marginalisation, and should ensure

Council's actions support those who most need help. To me, that means focusing on service delivery, especially in ways that affect those citizens who face the greatest barriers to access, and ensuring our decisions don't leave gaps that marginalised individuals may struggle to fill. It also means ensuring we make financial commitments rooted in helping those who struggle the most. Finally, it means explicitly funding groups and institutions that do good work for marginalised people in our community.

Peter Whittle - I believe a budget should find ways to help all persons that live in challenging situations. I think we need to have an ongoing round table with all organizations that represent such persons. St. John's has many such organizations such as Stella's Circle, Association for New Canadians, The Native Friendship Centre, John Howard Society, Single Parents Association, St. John's Status of Women's Council, and many more. There is no reason we can't find working solutions that address the disproportionate impacts our budget has on these communities.

Derek Winsor - No response.

WARD 3

Walter Harding - It's not how much money we spend, it's how we spend it that brings the most advantageous results. Resources available must be shared equally as the word "balanced" does not just mean numbers on both sides of the ledger equaling. It means much more. It means more voices are heard, it means more ideas are implemented, it means more people are educated and it means marginalized individuals are not disadvantaged because of lack of resources. Equal, balanced, fair for all has to be our goal.

Greg Noseworthy - All budgetary decisions must be undertaken in a manner that does not disenfranchise, discriminate, or create barriers for residents of our city, especially marginalized persons. While municipal budgets largely deal with infrastructure and staff personnel, consultation with community groups who engage with marginalized persons should be undertaken to ensure that these people are not being unnecessarily discriminated against or placed in situations where they will face additional hardships.

Jamie Korab - No response.

WARD 4 (acclaimed)

Ian Froude - A feminist municipal budget includes protection and enhancement of crucial public services that our community relies upon. Too often the discussion about

affordability in our community revolves only around the mil rate of municipal taxes. This is an important lens, but it is much broader than that. We can make a greater impact on well-being by enabling diverse housing options; making transportation less expensive and more accessible; growing employment by supporting sustainable businesses/social enterprises; and by creating opportunities for low cost recreation. A municipal budget shows our community priorities, and we can do more to prioritize equity and justice.

WARD 5

Scott Fitzgerald - Using gender based analysis in policy decisions can help inform budgetary decisions. Understanding how policy affects different people in different ways can paint a clearer picture for Council on where the gaps are in their budgeting process.

Carl Ridgeley - This question deals specifically with the budget; however, the essence of the question has a broader application to all city policies. In developing a budget, or any policy, a gender based analysis (GBA) must be an integral part of the process. In the “Gender Based Analysis Tool by Status of Women Canada”, GBA+ is defined as, “an analytical process used to assess how different women, men and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives”. The provincial Office of Women and Gender Equality has also done significant work with GBA+ and its resources could be used by the city.

Donnie Earle - No response.

Brenda Walsh - No response.