

Cherish Winsor – Kam Lake Candidate

September 15, 2019

In reply to NWT Association of Communities – Questions for MLA Candidates Election 2019:

(Answers in number sequence to each question received)

1. A \$40 million shortfall still exists for community governments. What is your position on the funding formula for community governments and the significant shortfall not being addressed over the past five years?

As a government, we have looked at this issue, with input from other stakeholders, and concluded that a funding formula based on needs, rather than population would better support communities in the NWT.

Closing the funding gap would allow communities to maintain infrastructure, address climate change, deliver services and create local jobs. However, some communities are currently overfunded based on the new model and an appropriate and fair solution would need to be implemented.

I am in support of increased funding to municipal and community governments to close the funding gap.

2. What steps will you take to ensure that communities funding shortfall as identified by MACA is addressed and do you commit to prioritizing funding?

In my platform I have committed to advocate for, increased funding for municipal and community governments with the aim of closing the funding gap to allow for the maintenance and replacement of existing infrastructure. Without this funding, communities are forced to choose between services and maintaining important infrastructure, often incurring additional long-term costs.

3. Homelessness, mental health and addictions are serious issues in the North. Are you willing to work to ensure these issues get addressed and potential solutions put in place in a timely manner?

Yes. As a social advocate, these issues form the core of my platform which can be viewed at www.cherishwinsor.com

Often, many of the social problems we are facing in the NWT like homelessness, addictions and poverty are related to poor mental health. By improving services that address some of the root issues, we can better support people as they seek help to lead productive lives.

Affordable housing is one of the biggest issues affecting the most people in the NWT. There are currently 2800 public housing units with 900 individuals and families waiting for a unit. Charitable organizations provide additional housing stock and also have long wait lists.

As an MLA, I commit to advocating for:

- A guaranteed income program that reduces the administration and cost of the GNWT's complex income security programs.
- A strategic long-term plan to address homelessness, including the "invisible" homeless and those precariously housed.

- A territorial addictions treatment facility with separate adult, youth and day programming areas. This Yellowknife facility will better address relapse prevention and remove the need to send people to southern facilities. We can provide this kind of holistic northern support without an increase in funding and better care for Northerners.
- Actions specific to addressing mental health issues facing our youth including addictions, suicide, trauma, anxiety and depression.
- Expansion of Child and Youth Care Counselors to all communities to better identify and support youth with mental health needs.
- A strategic territorial action plan to end family violence through community supports including expanding the shelter network, increasing road access to more communities and creating safe houses in all communities.

4. How do you think communities can prepare for the climate change crisis that is presently occurring in many communities and what is your position on the Territorial Government finding solutions and taking a leadership role with funding?

The GNWT must take a leadership role in finding solutions to the critical issues surrounding climate change. Through innovation and investment in climate research, we can better understand what is happening and build our infrastructure to withstand the affects of climate change. It would also help us to address food security and protect traditional ways of life.

At the community level, increased funding through an updated funding formula will allow communities to better prepare and prevent infrastructure issues caused by climate change.

Climate change is still abstract to many and the solutions are unknown. I applaud the leadership of the NWTAC in bringing all voices together to begin to find solutions to the issues facing us today and into the future. Continued collaboration will be essential as new research and information is provided.

5. What are your views on the issue of the early childhood education deficiency in the NWT and how it relates to post-secondary success of students and do you support an Auditor General Review of the education system?

Our children are our future and it is the responsibility of our government to provide them with the ability and opportunity to thrive. Right from birth, we can increase developmental outcomes and support families in their care taking role. Our education system, while mostly positive in Yellowknife, isn't as effective across the territory and it will take drastic measures to increase attendance and ultimately, graduation rates. As an MLA, I will advocate for a focus on affordable and accessible childcare so all children can experience developmentally appropriate care in all communities. This includes creating licensed care spaces in the 11 communities that are currently without, training more early childhood educators and providing a subsidy to licensed operators to reduce financial barriers.

The office of the Auditor General decides what issues to review based on performance audits studies that identify the main areas that would benefit from being examined. It is not the role of MLAs to determine whether a review is required, though I would support one should it be required.

6. The 2018 Federal Budget affirmed that its expectation is that a 25% portion of the revenues from cannabis excise taxes provided to the Territory and Provinces be transferred to municipalities and

local communities. What is your view of the GNWT deciding that there will be no revenues passed on to the municipalities from the Territorial Government?

Revenues from the sale of cannabis are not sufficient enough to provide much funding to all communities in the NWT. I would prefer that we focus on an appropriate funding formula for communities first and foremost so that these small funding pots are not necessary.