

Julie Green for Yellowknife Centre MLA

September 18, 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?

I agree the GNWT must create an implementation plan to close the gap in funding identified five years ago through a collaborative evaluation process and that once caught up, increases be indexed to the CPI.

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?

I will cite the responses of candidates to this questionnaire and call upon my fellow MLAs to incorporate elimination of the funding shortfall into the Mandate of the 19th Assembly. I will bring this commitment forward as a “must have” in the setting of the first and subsequent operating budgets.

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?

The day shelter and sobering center provide a vital service to the homeless and/or intoxicated population and to the community by reducing the burden of emergency services required. The center is not the solution to the problem, but an effort to reduce impacts. The next step is the introduction of a managed alcohol program.

The GNWT has a solid relationship with four southern addiction treatment centers so that residents have choices and immediate access. A total of 181 people accessed treatment last year. The weak link is after care, especially in communities outside of Yellowknife. On the land camps in Fort Smith piloted with Alberta-based Poundmakers Lodge provides a model for strengthening the continuum of care.

I support the GNWT’s community counsellor program, now in year two of a three year roll out. It provides immediate access to mental health supports that are community based.

Housing First programming has been successful not only in providing housing, but developing the residential skills needed to successfully maintain housing. The last Assembly failed miserably in improving access to housing. We must end the policy of no increases to the number of public housing units and support the City's 10 year plan by devoting a fairer share of capital dollars to human needs.

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?

Territorial government funding transfers to community governments must adequately finance the construction and/or retrofitting of municipal infrastructure meeting high energy efficiency standards. The NWTAC has already documented the cost impacts of climate change upon municipal infrastructure. This evaluation should be incorporated into the existing funding shortfall analysis and updated to reflect these increased costs. Community governments should be supported with GNWT climate change expertise to evaluate their risks, impacts and devise responses.

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?

More money needs to be invested in early childhood education in the form of universal child care. There is a strong correlation between children accessing licensed child care with trained staff and their success in school. It's my understanding that the Auditor General's decision around which departments to audit is outside of the political process. That is, they decide independently and work with the public service to conduct the audit. The politicians don't get involved until the audit is complete.

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?

GNWT revenues from cannabis sales have fallen far short of projections. The transfer of revenues from the federal to the territorial government was based on the provincial/territorial jurisdictions passing on a share of revenues in turn. The GNWT should honour this expectation and transfer the anticipated share to the municipalities to cope with the extra costs they may have implementing cannabis legislation. (Likewise for the carbon tax.)