

Thom Jarvis for Yellowknife entre MLA

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?

The formula needs to be amended. The community governments should be receiving these funds

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?

Devote 25% of moneys coming from cannabis sales in NWT to community funding to be added to community base funding. Taking those moneys into account, provide additional funding from the consolidated revenue to ensure a net 3% increase to community government funding each year, or 12% over the next four years.

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, definitely. One out of two Canadians will be confronted with mental illness in their lifetime either directly themselves or through a close family member affected by mental illness. Homelessness and addictions issues are most often symptoms of active mental illness. Readily and effectively treating mental illness (including active abuse of alcohol or drugs) should be the immediate priority. Getting people back on their feet is the priority. For those with chronic and persistent illnesses, further investment is required in community health and housing.

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?

Climate change is happening in the North at least at twice the rate it is in the south. Critical infrastructure is at risk. The life cycle of building foundations, bridges, roads, runways, utilidors and electrical distribution infrastructure is falling short of designed life cycle. It costs a fraction to secure a structure before it breaks as it does to repair or rebuild. Communities can prepare by identifying critical infrastructure and prioritizing infrastructure, implementing infrastructure monitoring and surveying programs to help identify and document needs. Once needs are identified, prioritized and documented, preventive measures can be implemented and structural work to secure critical infrastructure before it breaks can be performed. To fund all this, a new "Critical Infrastructure Protection against Climate Change" fund will need to be created for the Territory. It is the role of communities to identify and prioritize defensive measures against climate change to secure infrastructure. It is the role of the Territorial Government to 1-

consolidate documented needs from the communities, 2- implement territorial wide standards for monitoring and surveying, 3- provide technical expertise (structural engineers, building technicians, civil engineers) to implement monitoring plans and oversee preventive work, 4- secure Federal & territorial funding to pay for it all. Defending critical infrastructure against climate change is definitely beyond the financial scope of community governments.

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?

The earlier a deficiency is identified in a child, the more effectively these deficiencies can be identified. Addressing deficiencies early and effectively helps with achieving better post-secondary success. The funding for special education resources (speech therapists, tutors and school nurses) should be increased. It is cost effective to intervene early with deficiencies. (Example: identify need for a child to have glasses.)

Further, the metrics used to identify deficiencies should be re-visited to account for cultural diversity and the particulars of the North. This will help prioritize resources and address deficiencies more effectively. (The wage economy does not come natural to all, there are other more traditional models).

Finally, implement an upgrading program to be made available in all regions to add 6 months or 1 year to regular schooling for those students who under-perform in High School and wish to pursue further studies.

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?

This money should go to the communities. See answer to question 2.