

Frank Wong - Living Wage

1. What is your position on the living wage?

I support a living wage as it is the minimum amount a person needs to stay above the poverty line. However in today's depressed economy it is hard for small business owners to keep a full complement of employees as when the economy was growing. I am aware of workers getting reduced hours even before this month's minimum wage increase. Employees are now working spit shifts and business are opening later and closing earlier to balance their income and expense ledger. Prior to the last minimum wage increase to \$13.60 staff were making \$12.20 and working 8 hours shift and now they working 2 -3 hour shifts. $\$12.20 \times 8 \text{ hours} = \97.60 vs $\$13.60 \times 6 \text{ hours} = \81.60 which makes it harder for employees to actually make a living. There are people now working two part time jobs to make ends meet. We may need to slow down the next minimum wage increase until the economy picks up.

2. How will you implement a living wage strategy for all workers at the City of Red Deer, including contracted services?

I believe that all City employees are making above the living wage and the lowest may be the youth or beginner lifeguards are at \$16 or more. Contracted services are a bit different as some contractors like concession operators have family members of volunteers to assists when business exceeds expeditions.

3. How will you advocate to the provincial government for changes to the municipal government act to enable living wage in government procurement practices.

I would lobby our MLAs submit the issue in the next review of the Municipal Government Act as the MGA just completed a 3 year review and update. Our MLAs should also indicate that the government procurement practices should also include a living wage clause.

4. How will you foster a living wage culture in the community both with business and consumers?

We need a lot of dialogue and communications with business owners and consumers to foster a living wage culture. The segment of economy, small business owners usually in the service industry would need to give up a lot actually make a living themselves. We need a very healthy economy for this to happen.

Frank Wong