

MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2021
10 am City Hall media availability

ERIN WAITE WARD 7 CANDIDATE ADDS HER VOICE TO IMPROVED COVID PROTOCOLS AND GUIDANCE FOR CALGARY

Calgary, AB. Today, Erin Waite adds her voice to Calgary councillors and candidates who believe Calgarians need better guidance and enforced standards immediately due to increasing COVID Delta variant cases.

We are all tired of talking and hearing about COVID, ever-changing protocols, and wearing masks. But the time to add clear and definitive protocols is now.

With the effectiveness and availability of vaccines, Calgarians' daily lives and the economy will be improved immediately by:

1. Adding a proof of vaccination requirement to be met by mid-October to access services, participate at events, and attend workplaces, and
2. Required mask-wearing in indoor public places.

Readily and conveniently accessible vaccinations and testing plus case tracing must be in place to support the added measures and will determine the specific deadline for vaccination.

“Having led a non profit through the pandemic, I know that social services providers have been on quicksand. It’s time to support their ability to manage with clear mandates for vaccinations and mask-wearing. It’s a matter of client and employee safety and affects hundreds of thousands of Calgarians. It’s also the quickest way to get our economy up and running.” said Erin Waite, candidate for Ward 7 and 10-year leader in the disability sector.

Employers, particularly for businesses with customers and social services providing supports, are left in an impossible situation without improved guidance and a requirement for vaccinations.

Employers are required by law, yet unable, to guarantee a safe workplace without the support of clear guidelines. Untenable operating costs and staff shortages are occurring and will increase due to unvaccinated employees' absences and their 10- and 14-day quarantining requirements.

Among the thousands of for- and not-for-profit companies that have public-facing employees, the City of Calgary's Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) program contributes funding to 77 such organizations that provide 145 programs to 44,515 Calgarians. These City-funded non profit agencies will not have extra funding and capacity for added labour costs without clearer protocols, including vaccination requirements.

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Further, when standards are restricted rather than applicable to all – like limiting vaccination requirements only to front-line employees – it quickly and practically becomes impossible to manage.

Clear and consistent guidelines will support realities like management and administrative staff who cover for frontline staff. The non profit social services sector has long identified employee retention as an issue that threatens client safety.

Creating two standards within one organization can have serious, negative effects on motivating staff to support each other in a productive culture with a shared, client-centred mission.

While advocating for a national standard and provincial support and guidance, Calgary's City Council needs to act now to protect the well-being of Calgarians, and to support economic recovery. Further, guidance for Calgary should extend for the remainder of the year. It can always be ended early if cases are finally reduced to a negligible level. But short-term, on-again/off-again guidelines are contributing to COVID fatigue and lack of trust of authority.

Erin Waite supports the call for City Council to demonstrate leadership, rally citizens of Calgary, and immediately implement standards that will most quickly put the COVID pandemic behind us.

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Erin Waite is joining other candidates at City Hall on **Monday, August 30 at 10 am**. She will be available in person there or by contacting the campaign.

Contact: Erin Waite – cell: 403 804-6100 Jeanne Milne – cell: 403 667-8170
Website: erinwaite.ca

Background

Erin Waite is running for Ward 7 Councillor as a third career change and drawing on her +30 years living in Ward 7. With a combination of a corporate communications career followed by 10 years as a leader in the disability services non profit sector, Erin has experience to bring to the table. Having raised her three children in Calgary, all of whom have now left the city, Erin wants to help Calgary be the city where all of our young people choose to make their home. erinwaite.ca