

Meet the candidates of Tudor and Cashel



By Kristena Schutt-Moore

The municipal election candidates of Tudor and Cashel Township were invited to take part in a community meet and greet on Saturday, Oct. 1 at the town hall so that the community members and voters could get to know who they are voting for. This was the second all candidates type event that Mary Fox has hosted, and this year to ensure that all voters could ask questions and have full conversations with the candidates, Fox said they scrapped the idea of a traditional all candidates meeting and went with an informal meet and greet over a cup of coffee or tea and homemade cookie instead. All the candidates were in attendance except for Brent Taylor and Jerry Chadwick, both are running for a councillor seat. Bancroft This Week sat down with each candidate and asked them the same question. What is the most pressing issue that Tudor and Cashel faces now, and if elected, what would you do over the next four years as a member of council to address this important issue and possibly solve it? Bob Bridger, who currently sits on council as a councillor and is running for deputy mayor said, "The most pressing thing is we don't make good use of taxpayers dollars. We have 2.7 million dollars in reserve and up until about a year ago it was sitting in a daily interest savings account. Which, some of those reserves aren't needed for 10 years so why do you have them in a daily interest savings account? Why haven't you put them into a 10 year GIC or something like for future dump plans. We know we have about 10 years on our dump and every year we put money aside for a future dump closure, but it's been getting put into a daily interest savings account. Now that did change this year, at my harping, and a couple of the candidates who are running also were part of a finance asset management committee that the township did put together. So yeah we don't make the best use of it [tax dollars]. We buy equipment that we don't get value out of. Example the \$400,000 grader that I understand we get about 200 hours a year on it. That's five weeks. Why are we owning this, why don't we just contract that grader out. We could do so much more with that money. Our biggest controllable cost is our roads. But Tudor and Cashel is a huge area. We have a lot of roads and it seems like a bottomless pit. I understand Weslemkoon Lake Road is a Class 4b road and everything else in our township is a lesser class so the level of service has to be a higher level but this road services three other townships. And everyone who is on Weslemkoon Lake is all in Lennox and Addington, they take care of the last four kilometres, but the rest of the road is with us and the pounding it takes and logging that's just started. I can't see spending the residents of Tudor and Cashel money on a full repair because logging operations have just started there and they're going to run it for four years. Then there is the policing costs and the fire services bills as we don't have our own fire department." Elaine Holloway, who is running for councillor, answered, "I know what comes up in council meetings, but as a resident the thing is communication. Knowing more about what's actually going on and understanding what is happening, community events and on council. I come from the city, so it took a long time to get to know anybody. I just really felt isolated and I think there is a way to not have that happen for the new people that come here. And I know there is a transition, especially with COVID-19, in the population coming out this way as well. I have met some people who are making this area their permanent home, and there is not a lot of information available to make them feel part of the community. At least that's how I felt. How to solve that, I imagine my first year I'm going to be doing a lot of listening. I do believe there is a lot to learn and I know we have a three tier system, so there are a lot of decisions that are made

that we don't have control over. I believe there could be grant money and funding available to if we know where to find it and how to look for it that will help bring unity to the community, help to start up programs that had to stop because of the pandemic and maybe find new programs to start up, make people aware there's a reason to become involved. Finding volunteers is not an easy thing to do. People don't want to get involved if it means it's going to be a lot of their personal time, so we need to find ways to motivate them to want to become involved. And I think becoming a part of the community and having a sense of community is a way to do that. Roy Reeds, who is currently a councillor and is running for deputy mayor, said, "There are multiple issues, what's more important than another issue? We just kind of take them as they come. One issue that has been brought to my attention are the short term rentals. It's becoming an issue. You know the Air BnB type thing. We may have to look at, I don't believe we need a bylaw here, many municipalities in the province are putting in bylaws. But I don't believe we need one here. I believe that we need to just work with our bylaws we already have in place and enforce them. So in our municipality we do have a part time bylaw officer on trial, so that may be something we have to consider, but it all comes back to money. I think we need to use the by laws we have in place and use them and enforce them and go from there. It may even come to the point where the province will have to start stepping in because it has become an issue right across the province and many municipalities have bylaws for it and some are very restrictive. Fireworks is an issue that people have brought forward, that they may want a bylaw for fireworks in the municipality so that is something we may need to look at. But again I think that is associated with the short term rentals, people coming and partying. We don't have a lot of commercial stuff here. We are just going with the flow and try to work the best we can with what we got. I'd like to see us as a municipality working closely with other municipalities in a joint service of some sort." Jennifer Trumble, who is running for councillor, said, "I think our most pressing issue right now deals with the same problems as the province is having with the economy. So, with MPAC's phase in cycle of assessment they use comparable properties. So if the market value assessment of properties goes up, your neighbouring properties goes up, yours is going to go up. Your assessment will go up. This is an economically repressed area, there are a lot of seniors on low income that are not going to be able to take double assessment values. So I think as a council member, we need to look at our tax rates on a broader basis and look over a five year budget. We need to make sure that these services are economical for this area and we need to work towards economic development for our area. Specifically for Tudor and Cashel we need to make sure we retain our services, our medical clinic, our businesses that are already established and build on that. So I think the phase in cycle will really hurt some people in this area, whether you're seasonal, whether you're a full time resident, whether your low income or high end. It will all depend on an individual basis, but it will hurt people. Especially if it bounces from a high market value and then back down again. So understanding the taxation basis from being in a previous municipal administration I understand how that will affect individual taxpayers. I think introducing multi-year budgeting is important. You can budget just for a single year and look at that. I think that bringing in committees to look for efficiencies as well, working with other council members on that, and especially striking an economic development for our own township and working on that." Dave Hederson, who is running for mayor, answered by saying, "The most pressing issue is that this township has no vision, it has no strategic plan. and it has no proper financial plan. It needs a vision and it needs a plan to move forward. It needs a collaborative government that listens and learns from its tax payers base. It's sitting on significant financial resources, at the end of 2021 over \$7,000,000 in cash, and it's not properly invested. So what I'm intending to do is bring my skill set of financial leadership and management experience to the table to try and address some of these issues. I'm the former chief financial officer of McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited, the former chief financial officer of Beaver Lumber Company Limited, and served on the board of Ronald McDonald House Charities. I've been here, I've been a property holder for over 45 years. I retired here in 2016, so I have been a full time resident in the area since then. I might be considered an outsider, that's another thing I want to change in this township. We're all taxpayers, those of us who were born here, and those of us who moved here. I have been here for 45 years. I have two daughters and a grandson, and I hope that they will be my legacy and I am prepared to invest the time and energy that is required to fix things in this township for the benefit of my grandchildren and my children. I talked about collaborative government. First off we can start listening to people and learning from taxpayers. When you come to a council meeting you're not allowed to speak, that will change if I'm the mayor. Every resolution that comes before council will be discussed by council and before it is voted on by council tax payers who are interested in voicing their opinion will be allowed three minutes to express their opinion before council votes. And that is a huge step forward for this township, and that is how I would begin to foster that collaborative environment. With respect to the financials, I would implement, immediately, an investment strategy that would work for the benefit of all taxpayers. On the over \$2.7 million that they have sitting in the bank that is not working for us today and they would work tirelessly to ensure that we don't increase taxes unless absolutely necessary." Libby Clarke, who sits on council and is running to be re-elected as mayor, said, "The very first one that I'm concerned about is our healthcare system. We have a walk-in clinic here, but the doctor shortage is real. I am the chair of the Centre Hastings Family Health Team board of directors and so through that and the

county we have a man named John Nicholas who looks for recruitment doctors. So any time we got a lead for him, he's excellent. Also, I would like to bring the sustainability committee back. We did have a sustainability committee, which I was on before I became the mayor, but it didn't seem to pan out this term. So I would like to have the sustainability committee back and work on a strategic plan. That's a very important part of our township and through the strategic plan and then with the strategic plan we can then work on our asset management plan as well. And that will take next term to do that. I'm concerned about the pandemic fall out and what will happen here in North Hastings. Actually with the North Hastings Economic Development Plan that I'm chair of we have been really working where we can help North Hasting economically. Also housing, and affordable housing and then I could talk about health, mental health and addictions. There are a lot of issues in North Hastings that I would really like to work on. And you know emergency services too. I am on the emergency services committee for hasting county and the wait times are not bad, in Centre Hastings it's 15 minutes but up here it's nine minutes. The big issue is ambulances. We have five on back order but we can't seem to get them. To fix these issues I would bring information to council and explain to them what we are looking at and what I would be lookin at and hopefully I would get the council's support and I'm sure I would.?