

How To Vote

Advanced Voting

Monday Oct 17

Village Office in Benito

9AM to 7PM

Wednesday Oct 19

Swan Valley West Office in Swan River

8AM to 8PM

Mobile Voting

Benito Personal Care

Friday October 21 from 2PM to 3PM

Election Day is Wednesday October 26th

8AM to 8PM

Benito Legion Hall

Ward 1, 2 & LUD

Swan Valley West Office

Ward 3 & 4

Big Woody Community Centre

Ward 5

Lavender Community Hall

Ward 6

In The First
100
DAYS

GADE
for Reeve
Swan Valley West

Greetings!

I don't want a new truck. I'm not doing this to get my own road fixed. And, I certainly have no interest in a new leather jacket.

I'm doing this because it needs to be done and we all need a break from what has gone on the last several years.

My name is Bill Gade. And, I'm running for Reeve in Swan Valley West.

Today I'm sharing with you the things I think must be done to fix what is broken in Swan Valley West. Some of these things I can do as Reeve. They include listening instead of lecturing, welcoming each member of council to share their opinion and ensuring council meetings are fair to those who attend.

Other things I will need the help of council to accomplish. A Reeve is but one of seven voices. The majority need to agree to move this agenda forward. While I can promise to introduce each topic to council and ask for their support, they must agree to make much of this a reality.

I urge you to read this booklet. If you agree with many of the things I propose, I ask you to vote for me. If you disagree with some, tell me about your opinion so I can take it into account and find compromise.

And if you agree with little or nothing... know that if I am elected there will always be an opportunity for you to share your viewpoint and it will be considered as important—just like the viewpoints of your friends and neighbours.

I propose that for the first time in it's short history... Swan Valley West follow the rules, treat all people as equals and get on track to make this valley someplace we are all proud to call home.

On Wednesday October 26th, I ask for your vote for Reeve of Swan Valley West. Call me anytime to discuss your needs. I will be happy to talk with you. Both now, and after the election.

Bill Gade
Cell (204) 281-2768 Home (204) 539-2935

In The First 100 Days...

Out of Control Fees

The cost for water in Benito is more than doubling after council demanded a massive increase. The cost of dust control went up 10% without explanation. Taxes increased at more than the cost of inflation with less services being offered. Late fees of \$50 feel like gouging.

I'm committed to making user fees fair. That means finding out what it actually costs to provide water in Benito and adjusting the rates to the correct amount. I'm committed to reviewing dust control to ensure we charge what it costs to apply the product to your road.

And imagine being told that your taxes will double in a year? That has happened to some residents under the current Reeve.

I will always show you where your money is spent and tell you why council chose to spend it in that way. I will lead council to be fair to all residents and to make sure that our fees and taxes make sense. Living in Swan Valley West won't be free, but you can expect that you'll receive value for your money and that we will stop wasting it for fun.

Should you expect anything less?

Did You Know?

In Benito the water rates now pay for a full time position making \$35 an hour? But no one works full time at the water plant...

Dust control fees have been raised so that private residents subsidize the dust control for areas where the municipality considers dust a safety issue. That means you pay extra for your own dust control. That isn't fair.

A local company expressed interest in applying dust control for less money and in a better way. Council didn't even seek a quote from that local company and instead chose to stick with an out of town firm.

In The First 100 Days...

Rural Water Pipeline

\$18 Million Dollars is sitting... waiting... wasting away for our rural water pipeline project. If a water agreement had been signed with the Town of Swan River on time pipe for the rural water system would be in the ground by the time you are reading this.

I helped council apply for the federal and provincial funding. The project meets the criteria and un-officially we've been told it is approved except for that missing agreement.

We can fix this. I'll ask council to open negotiations with Swan River to get the water ready for the pipe. We'll make a fair deal that ensures rural growth and safe water for residents all along the route.

The opportunity to get the substantial funding won't last forever. Water can be affordable for rural residents if we act right after the election.

The pipeline will be paid for by those who use it. It does not mean higher taxes but it does mean higher property values and an opportunity to further grow the residential component of our rural area.

Did You Know?

The lack of water agreement is holding up more than the water pipeline. It also means that the new fire hall has no water. The fire trucks at the new hall have to go fill elsewhere each time they need water.

Swan River offered a new agreement and began negotiations but then was ignored for months. I attended one negotiating session before I was suspended from council. In that session I was able to show Swan River how to reduce the amount of money they wanted for water while still being fair to their own residents. That's working together... Something we need a lot more of in this valley.

In The First 100 Days...

Fixing Council Meetings

I commit to bringing forward immediate change to council meetings. All members of council will be encouraged to speak and share their opinion. I will not play favorites amongst the members.

At our first meeting I will ask council itself to choose a Deputy Reeve. That person will be trained on how to chair meetings and be prepared to act when needed. Anyone on council who wants to learn leadership will be given a chance to have experience and learn for their future council roles.

I will bring forward changes to the Code of Conduct Bylaw to prevent ANY member of council being removed again. I will encourage respect but I will not support any member or the views they represent being silenced. I believe it is wrong for council to have the power to evict anyone from the table. I have yet to meet anyone who can't sit at the table and discuss their views.

I will encourage public attendance at meetings and make sure they can hear what council is discussing and understand what is happening. I will make sure decisions and choices are communicated to everyone.

I will encourage public input so that no one feels their voice is not heard.

Did You Know?

Right now five members of council can chose to evict another member for up to 90 days? During that time they can not attend meetings or represent the views of any residents to council.

This led to me being suspended for much of the last term of council. I feel the reason for the suspensions was sharing the truth with the public. Truth they deserved to know.

We can never allow an elected official to be removed from the table just for telling the truth. Even when the truth is something we don't want to hear.

In The First 100 Days...

The Fire Department

I will ask council to immediately begin negotiations with the Town Of Swan River to make a fire services agreement that works for our residents and theirs.

I have a plan to stop the silliness of having two departments a mile apart.

Under my plan I will propose that the two departments are merged to create one fire department that is the best in the valley at both grass and structure fires. That department will be ready to defend our commercial assets such as Pioneer, Spruce Products and Co-op Agro. It will re-use the new fire hall and integrate the equipment Swan Valley West purchased.

Our valley is better working together and so are our fire departments. As part of an agreement with the Town we will remove fire as a negotiating tactic for other services.

Never again will the fire protection of our area be used to negotiate anything else - both councils will put the safety of our citizens and visitors first. We've spent more than one million dollars on fire protection and it looks like the big reason is someone wanted to drive a fire truck. Enough. Lets do fire in a reasonable, sensible way.

Did You Know?

The Town and Rural area used to both own the fire department. In that way the service was always available to both and not part of any dispute over other services.

The first time Reeve Galloway served years ago that relationship ended. Back then the rural area was on the path to buying its own fire truck and having its own department. Now that same path is being followed again and it is costing a lot of extra money.

It didn't make sense then and it doesn't make sense now. This is a critical step in having our valley grow and stopping the fighting.

In The First 100 Days...

Safe Water in Benito

The water will not be brown in Benito. Or pink.

I commit to having council engage the services of the Walkerton Water Safety Institute to determine the solution for the Benito water quality issues. We will immediately undertake better line flushing and better operation of the existing plant. Then we will work on a long term solution.

Once we have a solid plan, its time to act. We will seek grants to help cover the cost. If we have to replace the plant... we will. But we'll find the most cost effective way to ensure the water is safe and attractive.

When something goes wrong, I will ensure council is up front about the issue. You will know when a boil water order is issued and why. You'll also know when its rescinded.

Communication is key on so many topics, including water. You need to know the current test results, what they mean and how we work toward water that you trust to drink and use for daily activities.

We can, must and will do better with the water in Benito.

Did You Know?

The current council approved over \$100,000 of upgrades for the Benito water plant. But... the Utility committee and the operators don't know what the money will be spent on?

Lost paperwork meant that council spent over \$80,000 on re-checking sewer lines in Benito.

The Walkerton Institute offered to help solve the water problems free of charge. But, when council was told of the offer they determined that no help was needed because everything was already fine. To this day the water quality issues continue.

In The First 100 Days...

Customer Service

Things have not been going well for a lot of residents who need service from Swan Valley West. We've all heard the stories of people being hung up on, ignored and left out for having an opinion that doesn't match that of our current council or administration.

I will lead a council and administration that treats every resident with respect and doesn't discriminate. You'll be welcome to tell council we aren't doing a good job, share your suggestions and still get gravel on your road without fear of being punished.

I'll encourage every member of council to answer their phone and be the first stop for help when you need them. Of course you can also call the office. But if you call a council member I want more than you being told they can't help you. I want them to do their best to give you accurate information and get your concerns addressed.

And of course... you'll always be welcome to call me as the Reeve. Talk to me as often as you want. Hold me accountable. Leave a message and have it returned. Just the normal level of customer service you expect from the group of people elected to serve you.

Did You Know?

Taxes pay for each member of council to have a cell phone and a computer with email access. When those things are paid for you should have the expectation that members will answer your call and respond to your emails.

In fact, the bylaws of Swan Valley West provide that if a member of council does not have voicemail and return messages they should not have their cell phone paid for by taxes. That's fair.

I don't believe that once elected we should ignore you. Instead we should always take input and make the best decisions possible.

In The First 100 Days...

Fair Purchasing Policy

As Reeve I will ensure that council follows its existing purchasing policy and upgrades the policy to ensure fairness.

Sealed tenders will be opened in public. Vendors will be treated fairly and we will no longer "negotiate" to see if a better deal can be reached after the fact. Vendors will be able to trust Swan Valley West.

I will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to sell to Swan Valley West.

When you deal with a municipality you expect a clear idea of what we want to buy. We must provide a clear tender document. We must give you time to complete the bid and we must have you submit it fairly.

Then, we must open the tenders and review them. That isn't the time to start going to bidders and asking them to do it cheaper because we don't like the amount they bid. If you are known for doing that, they will always bid higher than they needed to so there is room to be talked down.

Fair tendering leads to the best prices and the best use of tax dollars.

Did You Know?

Current council has been opening tenders in secret. Does it make sense that two companies would bid the exact same amount for different brands of graders? To the penny?

Some local contractors are refusing to provide bids to council because they say they no longer trust council to be fair. That means less competition and higher prices.

In the current term of council over \$250,000 was wasted when staff got involved with a tender for bridge repair. That's enough for a whole years worth of road gravel wasted on petty games with tenders.

In The First 100 Days...

Staff Relations

23 Resignations and counting in just a few years. That isn't normal!

Fixing staff moral starts at the top with the Reeve. I'll make sure staff know that I value them and the work they do for our municipality. And I'll lead council to a new approach to employees. Gone will be the days of treating them like slaves. Instead, we will involve them and make sure we are all working toward the same goals.

Can you imagine buying a new grader without asking the people who use it every day which features they need to keep our roads in tip top shape? We've done that and according to staff have wasted time, money and fuel as a result.

What about having to pay settlements to staff when administration treated them so poorly and then fired them? It has happened too; along with non disclosure agreements to keep them silent about what council and their CAO did.

Council has routinely demanded non disclosure agreements with several former staff members to hide the issues that caused them to leave. It is time for that practice to end.

Did You Know?

Council hired a human resources expert to investigate claims by staff that they were being mistreated. After numerous interviews with staff and council the expert threw up his hands and said rarely does he see such a huge rift between a council and their staff.

He made numerous recommendations both officially and unofficially. The majority of council chose to keep the results secret. But of all the recommendations... all that was done was employees were given a piece of paper to keep track of what they do each day. And then there were yet more resignations. It seems that piece of paper didn't fix everything that was wrong in Swan Valley West.

In The First 100 Days...

Fixing the Roads

It is not normal that when it rains 1/10th of an inch that our roads turn into mud pies with ruts and stuck vehicles.

After the election I'll start by asking that we keep mowing ditches until all of the tall grass and small trees are removed to make snow removal easier.

Then, we'll make sure we get permission and ridge fields to limit the impact of drifting snow. We'll re-instate the homecare & school route list. We'll add those with health needs such as pregnancy. We'll have a plan to make sure safe travel is available to everyone. And we'll make sure you know how to get help when you need it.

We'll be ready to mitigate flooding when the snow melts.

Come spring we'll support our operators with the tools and materials they need to improve our roads. I will ask every operator to treat your road like it's their own. And I'll remind council that our number one responsibility is ensuring that each resident, farmer and visitor can travel when needed, haul their goods and be safe on Swan Valley West roads.

We will answer the phone when you call and fix what you report.

Did You Know?

It was a rough winter but it was made much worse by a lack of planning. Numerous fields weren't ridged. No plan was in place for how to plow all roads as quickly as possible.

I believe when our residents need help, we should be there. If that's clearing their lane or making a path to their bales or grain... we should be working together.

I'll ask council to review and change policy to make sure the equipment you paid for is ready when you need it for exceptional circumstances. This is your municipality, not councils.

Why Did I Chose to Resign from Council?

On September 14th I resigned as the member of council for Ward Three. It is important you know why I did that...

The majority of council has suspended me numerous times for sharing the truth about what has been happening at Swan Valley West. I think you needed to know. They thought it should stay secret.

Over the past few months they have piled up the suspensions in hopes of keeping me from being able to serve on council after the election. Its crap and it wouldn't work. But to ensure there isn't any question I can serve as Reeve when elected I chose to resign a couple days before I filed my nomination papers.

My resignation means that all suspensions have now ended. Should I be fortunate enough to be elected Reeve I can begin my term at noon the day after the election. That means I can get to work for you immediately.

The people of Ward Three trusted me to represent them on council and I did that to the best of my ability. It hurt me as much as it hurt them to know that even just going to the municipal office to ask a question led to James Webb asking staff to call the RCMP to have me removed.

Did You Know?

The current council demanded that no member of council share information with residents and voters? There were to be no facebook posts, letters to the editor or anything else unless they were written by Galloway or Webb?

The silliest thing I was ever suspended for was a 14 word facebook post. Council felt that just those 14 words of truth were worth 90 days away from representing ward three.

I can't even remember the last time I got paid for being on council. My wages as a member have been taken away too.

In The First 100 Days...

Garbage & Recycling

I think we should recycle when it makes sense. We should pickup garbage for urban residents too. But I don't think we should force every home to pay \$300+ per year for a service they may not want or need.

We need a plan that doesn't cost as much and does only what we need. That plan needs to be implemented by local residents so the jobs stay inside our valley.

I'm not suggesting that people in Alpine will help pay for people near Swan River to have their garbage picked up at their lane. But I am suggesting we will ensure that every resident has a suitable opportunity to dispose of waste AND recycle the materials that can help the environment.

That might mean we don't recycle every material. But, we can focus on the materials that make the most sense. After all, what is the point of paying to haul a material all the way to Winnipeg just for it to go into a different landfill? We can do this smarter, cheaper and better.

I will help council look at ways to improve service without breaking the bank.

Did You Know?

Most residents weren't aware council was proposing a \$300+ fee per year for recycling and garbage in Kenville, Durban and around Swan River and Benito. Most thought they could opt out of the fee but that wasn't the case.

For some the new fee meant their taxes would nearly double even though they already have a plan in place for their garbage and recycling.

All of that money goes to an out of town contractor who hires no one in our valley. It just grows their town instead of ours!

Questions & Answers

Why a list of things for the first 100 days?

We need to set goals. For too long council has been holding meetings with a few minutes notice of topics. I feel it important to have a clear direction of items we need to deal with. That doesn't mean we will ignore everything else but these are things I want to be talked about sooner rather than later.

Why should we vote for you?

I have a track record of telling it like it is. As reeve that will continue and you can expect open answers about any topic. I know I have a better knowledge of the provincial and municipal laws. I know how to find grant money to ease our tax burden.

I'm the council member who shows up prepared for meetings. I research the topics and know what I'm talking about. I know I am the best choice for reeve and the best choice to help council find direction and move forward.

Are you even allowed to be reeve?

I sure am. I am legally allowed to run and be elected. I can start serving my term as reeve at noon the day following the election. Anyone who suggests otherwise is wrong at best, or lying and trying to trick you at worst.

I pay taxes and I get nothing. No gravel. No snow plows. Why?

Council has not placed any priority on our basic services. I plan to make sure our roads are good first and always. That includes gravel and plowing snow. It involves mowing the ditches. It involves caring.

Why do so many of your tax dollars get wasted? In the four years I was on council no real budget was ever done. Each year just after the deadline council said "lets spend what we did last year but increase it a bit". Council never looked at what we spend money on and if there are better ways. There was no attempt to get value for money or to find waste.

I intend to go through the budget line by line months before its due. That will allow time to make sure your tax money is spent on the priorities and not simply spent because "there was money in the budget for that".

It won't be instant but it will be much better already by 2023 and it will keep improving as long as I'm elected to council. A vote for me is a vote for things being better than they have been lately.

What is the deal with the new fire department?

Council voted to create a new fire department in late 2021. I voted against it because no one could show me it would save money or make residents safer. Since then, we know a lot more.

The new department will cost about the same or more than Swan River wanted to provide the fire service for us. That's around \$120,000 a year. For that money in Swan River we got access to more fire fighters, more equipment and better training. We were protected from cost creep of always needing something more to do the job.

The new fire hall cost a lot. Council broke the New West Partnership Agreement by breaking up the cost of construction into smaller pieces to hide it from you. It appears the hall cost around \$400,000 in renovations which doesn't include a water line to fill the trucks.

Council bought two fire trucks. One brand new, one used from the USA. Together those two trucks cost around \$600,000. Council has also bought a ton of other smaller equipment like breathing gear, jaws of life, etc.

All together the start up cost is well over a million dollars. That was ALL tax money from you that should have gone to better uses. All of that money spent won't save us a dime on operating costs each year. In fact, operating costs will very likely exceed what Swan River wanted to provide the service.

You were never allowed to say if you wanted a new fire department or to spend over a million dollars on one. Galloway told the public that their opinion did not matter because once council was elected they didn't care what people thought.

Did you notice I'm the only one telling you the actual numbers? Telling the truth is important.

I promise that I will never say your opinion does not matter. I will never lead a council to make a huge decision without public input. Yes, council does represent you but that isn't once every four years. We need to represent you each and every day. A vote for me is a vote for accountability and honesty.

Think twice about voting for the members of council who said your voice didn't matter when it came to spending your money on a fire department.