

FORT MCMURRAY
CHAMBER
of **COMMERCE**

CANDIDATE PROFILES

**NOMINEES BOOKLET
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
JUNE 22, 2023**



INTRODUCTION

Our Vision

Driving
Extraordinary
Results for
Business

The Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to promoting business growth and development, advocating for sound public policy, and serving our members with outstanding programs and benefits. The Chamber of Commerce is the premier advocate of the region's business community, representing hundreds of members across the region with one voice.

In 2020, we introduced new bylaws and developed a board skills assessment to ensure that we, as a board had the composite skills required to govern and provide direction for our Chamber.

In seeking nominations for upcoming board vacancies, we have asked each candidate to assess themselves along the skill gaps identified as a board, with 1 being the highest skill level. This assessment included age diversity.

For the 2023-2025 term, the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce has six (6) vacancies. We are pleased that we have eleven (11) nominees to choose from. We urge our membership to review the skills identified as valuable to our work as a Chamber as part of the process of selecting your preferred candidates.

Thank you to all of our nominees that have offered yourselves up to serve as volunteer board members in building a better environment for our businesses today and in the future.

This booklet shares the details of our nominees for your perusal.

THE NOMINEES

CURRENT DIRECTORS UP FOR RE-ELECTION		
	Name	Organization
1	Gene Dobie	Genron Enterprises
2	Graham Ure	Suncor Energy

	Name	Organization
3	Alona Cruz-Farthing	Merit Hotel and Suites
4	Benjamin Gill	2303704 Alberta Ltd.
5	Christopher Wruck	Clean Harbors
6	Glenn Stephenson	Rotaflow Fire & Utility
7	Kyla Penner	KPSquared Inc.
8	Melanie Galea	RE/MAX Fort McMurray
9	Michael Durocher	Mr. Mikes Steakhouse & Casual
10	Paige Cyr	The Agency Fort McMurray
11	William Clarke	M&M Food Market

The Chamber strives to ensure that the Board of Directors has an appropriate mix of skills and abilities while also being reflective of the diversity in our region. Skills assessment was required as part of the nomination process, and we are providing this information to you, our membership, in advance of the Annual General Meeting.

We identified that individuals with practiced qualifications in the following areas are ideal for candidacy as Chamber of Commerce Board members:

- Accounting and Finance
- Technology and E-Commerce
- Procurement
- Supply Chain
- Research, Evaluation, and Analytics
- Land Development/Leasing
- Fundraising



GENE DOBIE

Principal at Genron Enterprises

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	3
Technology/E-Commerce	5
Procurement/Supply Chain	1
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	4
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	2

Gene is in the 56 - 70 Age Group and represents the Construction & Development sector

With over 40 years of experience in design, project and contract management, Gene brings forth his expertise in contracts, insurance, planning & development, innovating and improving policies within the organization.

Gene is the chairman for two condominium associations being River Park Glen & the Barrington, supporting budgets, finance and insurance while giving guidance to reserve funds and property upkeep.

Gene joined with the Fort McMurray Public School board Audit Committee two years ago and provides his support to their financial, operational and risk management as per their mandate.

Gene came to Fort McMurray in 1976 to work on the Syncrude plant with Bechtel Canada and stayed ever since investing into the industries and community. He is married, has two grown children and 5 grandchildren.

Within his busy schedule finds time to travel and snowboard in the winter and play tennis when he can through the summer months. He loves hospitality and enjoys that part of community.

His mantras: “ A goal should scare you a little & excite you a lot”- Joe Vitale

He believes we are given three important assets in life that are to be shared; our God given talents, time and resources. Any one of these when given with the right motive of genuine care, love and wisdom provides for the less fortunate and unmet needs of others. Generosity provides for strong families and community; it is love in action.



GRAHAM URE

Director of Operations - East Tank Farm
Suncor Energy

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	3
Technology/E-Commerce	4
Procurement/Supply Chain	2
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	1
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	5

Graham is in the 36-55 Age Group and represents the Oil & Gas/Mining sector

Graham Ure is currently the Director of Operations - East Tank Farm for Suncor Energy. He graduated from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering and moved to Fort McMurray in 2003 to join Suncor. Since that time has held several roles of increasing responsibility in Engineering, Operations Management, Health and Safety, Supply Chain Management. His educational and work experiences provide a breadth of skills that benefit the chamber, including but not limited to Research, Evaluation and analytics and Procurement and Supply chain.

Prior to moving to Fort McMurray in 2003 Graham grew up on a small family farm in central Alberta where his love for the outdoors began. He currently enjoys spending as much time outside as possible in the many activities available in Fort McMurray, from golfing in the summer and snowmobiling in the winter, with his wife and two small boys. He also enjoys spending time with his brother, who also moved to Fort McMurray in 2003 and his family (wife and 3 young children).

Over the last two years Graham has been on the Board of Directors for the Chamber and was recently appointed the Chair of the Policy Committee. Previous to the Chamber, in addition to volunteering with some smaller local groups Graham has held formal volunteer positions with the Coalition for a Safer 63/881 (2015-2018, Director and Vice-Chair) and Safe Communities Wood Buffalo (2019-2021).



ALONA CRUZ-FARTHING

General Manager of the Merit Hotel and Suites

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	1
Technology/E-Commerce	2
Procurement/Supply Chain	3
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	5
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	4

Alona is in the 36-55 Age Group and represents the Hospitality & Tourism sector.

Alona Cruz-Farthing currently holds the position of General Manager at the Merit Hotel and Suites. Prior to joining the Merit Hotel, she served as the General Manager of the Nomad Hotel in downtown Fort McMurray for four years. Alona's dedication to managing these properties, building connections with individuals, and demonstrating care towards guests and clients showcases her deep passion for the hospitality industry. She has proven her ability to succeed in a demanding business that constantly requires innovative ideas and quick thinking to ensure profitability.

Before joining the management team of the Atlific group of properties, Alona worked her way up from the position of Events Sales Manager to an Accountant, and eventually assumed the role of Front Office Manager at the Radisson, a reputable banner hotel. These experiences were enlightening and exposed her to the factors that drive clients to become loyal patrons.

Alona's involvement in the hotel industry extends beyond her managerial roles. She has actively served on the hotel board for the past five years and in 2020, she became an executive officer of the Fort McMurray Hotel Association. This position provides her with valuable insights into various aspects of hotel operations, business viability, and sustainability.

With her optimistic outlook and remarkable ability to transform stagnant projects into vibrant and exciting endeavors, Alona has emerged as a young General Manager. Her positive attitude and vibrant personality create a comfortable environment for guests, instilling confidence in their choice to stay at her establishments. She firmly believes that environment and ambiance play crucial roles in attracting repeat visitors, emphasizing that glitz and glamour are not the sole determinants of guest satisfaction. Alona's humility and dedication allow her to demonstrate genuine care for her clients, establishing a sense of trust.

Alona's ascent in her career path became clear after she received the Fort McMurray Hotel Group Manager of the Year award in 2017. The recognition she received along her journey has propelled her to the top of her field, earning her immense respect from her peers. She willingly shares her knowledge and passion with new employees who share similar interests, believing that knowledge is a powerful asset that should be shared generously.

Active community involvement remains an integral part of Alona's commitment to the hospitality industry. With the support of the Fort McMurray Hotel Group Team, she spearheads the "Team Engage" group, participating in various community initiatives such as the CIBC Run for the Cure, Wood Buffalo Community Clean Up, SPCA Bake for a Cause, the Center of Hope, "Feeding the Homeless," and the Food Bank Food Drive.

On a personal note, Alona has faced numerous challenges living in Fort McMurray, including the devastating wildfire of 2016 that destroyed her home. Overcoming this adversity has reinforced her dedication to rebuilding both her own life and her community. Since 2017, she has actively served as a member with the Waterways Neighbourhood Society, contributing to various events and projects organized by the society.



BENJAMIN GILL

Owner/Director at 2303704 Alberta Ltd.

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	1
Technology/E-Commerce	4
Procurement/Supply Chain	5
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	2
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	3

Benjamin is in the 36-55 Age Group and represents the Accounting & Finance sector

A recovering corporate banker (soul re-implantation forthcoming), Ben is a self-professed business nerd, passionate about building relationships and communities.

A strong believer in conservation, social responsibility and sustainable solutions Ben is excited to participate in industries and projects which seek ways to continue to innovate while furthering these same values.

In his spare time, Ben seeks to lend his time to people and organizations that align with his community based focus and that seek to emphasize compassion, courage and integrity in all that they do. In turn, he is a steadfast proponent of effective governance as the foundation upon which organizations can most effectively express their values and achieve success.

Ben was born in New Zealand to British parents and moved to Canada at an early age and is not to blame for the confused nature of his accent. When not working and volunteering his time, he enjoys cycling, reading, movies, travel, eating, and football (both kinds).



CHRISTOPHER WRUCK

Account Manager at Clean Harbors

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	3
Technology/E-Commerce	2
Procurement/Supply Chain	1
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	4
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	5

Christopher is in the 36-55 Age Group and represents the Environmental and Industrial Services/Community Engagement sector.

Chris Wruck was born and raised on a beef farm west of Edmonton, and spent most of his life in rural Alberta and small towns, graduating from Stony Plain in 2002.

Chris pursued a career in culinary arts, and after working as a camp caterer switched into oil and gas exploration on the drilling rigs after 3 years in the culinary field.

After his initial 4 years across western Canada, he accepted the offer to become a Canadian based United States rotator and spent the next 5 years across Northwest and Northeast United States, working across 9 states and exploring another 30 on his days off, discovering small town America. All while mentoring new teammates and advancing his career upward.

Chris' career path then shifted into the world of sales in the waterworks distribution industry for 3.5 years in Edmonton, seeking more stability. During this time, he focused on learning purchasing, procurement, sales and project management. The opportunity was put forward by his employer to learn to manage and grow a small branch in Lloydminster (Emco Waterworks), to where he took residence in 2015. While becoming engaged in the community and learning all about the region he was successful in his role and was offered an opportunity to move up to Fort McMurray in March 2017.

Upon arrival he took over a larger location (Emco Waterworks) and was an intricate part in the municipal rebuild after the 2016 wildfire in the underground rehabilitation focusing on leading the team and growing the business. During his next 6 years he became engaged in multiple nonprofits and volunteer roles to which he became engaged in the community and grew as a member. His passion to support the RMWB continued, and he became a common face at fundraisers, community events and opportunities to get involved.

2023 came along and he moved into the role of Account Manager at Clean Harbors with one of his primary focuses being community engagement and environmental services within the region. Chris still spends a lot of time engaged in fundraisers, support projects, networking and volunteering with non-profits and other various campaigns. He is often found, in his spare time, on the golf course, or out and about enjoying the many viewpoints of the region. He has coached minor hockey, while having no children, as well as been a foster/member of the Wood Buffalo Animal Rescue and is in the early stages of becoming a Shriner. Added to the various groups he is a part of, he is also an advocate for local business support and wanting to find ways to help small business succeed in the region.

He is an advocate for utilization of social media for small business and trying to engage small private business in networking events and exposing their offerings to people who may be unaware. The passion he has for community spirit, small town attitude and wanting to be involved has found him a home in the region and makes Fort McMurray a place he is proud to call home. Added to the uniqueness of the region and the world of opportunity, he speaks often of how great the community is as well as the history of the region and why it is arguably one of the greatest places around, despite the cold winters.



GLENN STEPHENSON

Director of Business Development
Rotaflow Fire & Utility

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	4
Technology/E-Commerce	1
Procurement/Supply Chain	3
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	2
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	5

Glenn is in the 56-70 Age Group and represents the Risk Evaluation sector.

Glenn Stephenson is an SME (Subject Matter Expert) in fire protection systems. Glenn is currently Director of Business Development at Rotaflow Fire and Utility stationed in Fort McMurray. After living in Alberta from 1979 until 1988 Glenn was offered to go work in Hong Kong by his employer. This turned into starting a local company in Hong Kong to continue working in the fire protection business. While living and working in Hong Kong, Thailand, Taiwan, China, and India. Glenn immersed himself in learning about the cultures of these areas.

Having the opportunity of working at many various construction sites he gained a rare view of working life in these areas. Glenn worked in Fort McMurray from 1980 to 1988, He had personally worked in most of the city’s iconic buildings during construction The Hospital, Thickwood Arena, Downtown Provincial and Municipal Office towers, Keyano Purple Building to mention a few.

Glenn moved back to Canada making Fort McMurray home. Having worked at most building in Fort McMurry in the first 10 years of his career it was not difficult adjustment. Working at Suncor Base Plant Sands site for the next 18 years. Glenn has just become as Board Member to the Alberta Chapter of CFAA (Canadian Fire Alarm Association).

Glenn is passionate about the future for his multicultural family in Fort McMurry and looks forward to the journey ahead. Since moving to Fort McMurray Glenns most of his extended Filipino family have immigrated to Fort McMurray and all live and work here.

Glenn, hobbies are passion are spending time with grandchildren and taking dog to dog park.



KYLA PENNER

Founder/CEO KPSquared Inc.

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	3
Technology/E-Commerce	5
Procurement/Supply Chain	2
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	1
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	4

Kyla is in the 18-35 Age Group

Kyla Penner is the CEO and Founder of KPSquared Inc.

KPSquared Inc. is the leader of innovative child care strategically working to inspire a new standard in Fort McMurray and Alberta. Child care must act to find solutions and accommodate the increasingly complex and challenging environments families face today.

KPSquared is developing an Innovative 24-Hour Child Care Centre to fulfill the growing needs with health care, education, and inclusive care that serves the whole family unit.

They are committed to accommodating a variety of families who work shift work and non-traditional hours. Alberta is facing historic unemployment amid the largest economic crisis since the Great Depression. Access to quality child care is key to creating jobs, female labour force participation, and facilitating economic growth, sustainability and recovery. Families need flexible and integrated child care services that work cohesively with their careers.



MELANIE GALEA

Real Estate Agent at RE/MAX Fort McMurray

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	4
Technology/E-Commerce	1
Procurement/Supply Chain	5
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	2
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	3

Melanie is in the 36 - 55 Age Group

Melanie Galea is a very proud Real Estate Professional for RE/MAX in Fort McMurray since 2007 and LOVING every minute of it. Prior to moving to Fort McMurray she had joined the Whitby, Ontario Chamber of Commerce in 1996 and has been a user of the Chamber Benefits Program.

Her goal is this; she wants her clients' experience to be personal, positive and exciting. She embraces technology and the power of social media and videography when it comes to the buying and selling processes. Melanie started implementing video in 2013, a marketing initiative ahead of her time. This has led to speaking internationally on her success and tips for Real Estate Professionals. Discover Fort McMurray was started in May 2016 using Facebook, Instagram & Youtube with the intention of promoting local businesses to the community so residents realize the value and importance of shopping locally on our economy. She's run several shop local campaigns in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce. She's also organized three 30 videos in 30 days and two 12 days of Christmas. She also runs the Facebook page "Discover Fort McMurray Community Connection" a place where residents can ask where to shop and local businesses and can advertise themselves. What she's probably the most proud of is receiving an RMWB Citizen Nomination Award for her contribution to the community in 2019.

Melanie was elected to the Chamber of Commerce Board in 2018. Her contribution has been the voice of small business for: Shop Local Passport Program, hiring ED committee, providing videos for the awards, helping revise by-laws and procedures.

Most recently Melanie is the Past President of the Fort McMurray Real Estate Board. During that time she oversaw the hiring of a new Executive Director and the initiative for the sale of the local building. She has completed Board Governance training through the Canadian Real Estate Association Level 100, 200 & 300. Having been a leader in her own field she will bring Board experience as a Director of the Chamber.

She is also presently completing a course called "Being a Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership. This course has been taught at Harvard, The US Air Force and Texas A&M University. The skills experienced here: effective listening, integrity and self-expression are skills that will benefit being a Director for the Chamber.

Melanie is seeking nomination to the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to be a voice of small business and to help grow the membership and ensuring that the Chamber provides value to its members with events, awards, networking opportunities and education. Her contribution is the connection to small businesses through organizing the shop local days, smart marketing, providing detailed housing market input and my passion to make Fort McMurray a great place to live, work and play in. A strong local economy keeps people moving and thriving here. She's watched how the Chamber of Commerce has pivoted since she was involved in 2018-2020 and believes it's exciting to see the immense change and impact this Chamber has had on our community. She would be honoured to bring her passion and leadership as a contribution to our Business Community and Citizens.



MICHAEL DUROCHER

President of Mr. Mikes Steakhouse Casual

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	4
Technology/E-Commerce	2
Procurement/Supply Chain	1
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	3
Land Development/Leasing	5
Fundraising	

Michael is in the 56-70 Age Group and represents the Hospitality/Service sector.

Michael is a born and raised proud Albertan who has called Fort McMurray home for the past 28 years. Michael has been married to his wonderful wife Cathy for 37 years, and together they have two children who live and work in Fort McMurray.

Michael received a Certificate in Adult Education from St. Francis Xavier University. He has completed courses in accounting, marketing and musical instrument repair as well as numerous music courses.

He has worked in warehouses and culinary in his early years as well as road construction working on heavy equipment. Michael then started and operated MC's Music Repair Inc. and grew a business from a sole proprietor to a corporation. He then successfully sold that business before moving to Fort McMurray. He designed and taught the Musical Instrument Repair course at Keyano College successfully for 15 years, dealing with students from all over the world and creating arguably one of the best programs of its kind nationally and internationally. Michael has been a consultant who has worked with the OSDG and WBEA organizations as well as an agent for ECODomes Canada. A band leader and trumpet player for the band "A Touch of Class" as well as the former Director for the Fort McMurray Community Jazz Band, Michael tries to always find ways to contribute to the community. Currently Michael run and operates MR MIKES SteakhouseCasual and employs over 30 employee as an owner (President – 1942182 Alberta Ltd.)/operator (GM – MR MIKES SteakhouseCasual – Fort McMurray).

Michael has over 24 years of experience working on boards. His first experience was with a daycare centre, and then with his professional association followed by the Keyano College Faculty Association including a sitting on the Executive committee. He has spent nine years as a Director on the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce and a former Director on the Arts Council Wood Buffalo, where he was instrumental in developing policies and key pillars for the organization. Currently helping with the McMurray Metis with Board Governance he can be found asking questions and focusing on helping. Michael has recently been appointed to the Board of the Infinity Metis Corp (IMC) and looks forward working with a great group of business people.

Michael has been a champion of the community by attending and presenting frequently at Municipal Council meetings. Michael hopes to use his in-depth knowledge of community issues to provide a voice to meaningful discussion and counterpoint.

Michael hopes to secure a spot on the Chamber Board of Directors again and seeks your vote.



PAIGE CYR

Managing Partner / Real Estate Associate
The Agency Fort McMurray

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	5
Technology/E-Commerce	2
Procurement/Supply Chain	4
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	3
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	1

Paige is in the 18 - 35 Age Group

As Managing Partner of The Agency Fort McMurray, Paige Cyr leads with strength, tenacity and an unwavering commitment to achieving her clients' real estate goals. In addition to her bold negotiation tactics, 24/7 availability and exceptional client service, Paige is backed by a far-reaching local network—which comprises past clients, industry professionals and entrepreneurs. Whether serving buyers, sellers or investors, Paige has the contacts, knowledge and tools to successfully guide clients through their real estate journey.

An experienced real estate investor and home renovator, Paige and her husband Corey—who serves as fellow managing partner of The Agency Fort McMurray—have been featured on HGTV's Battle on the Beach competition series.

As an active member of the local community, locals recognize Paige as an honest and caring neighbour and has been voted Fort McMurray's Favourite Realtor 2022 + 2023. As a member of the Wood Buffalo Animal Rescue Committee and local activist for many other non-for-profits, Paige's passion and eagerness to enrich Fort McMurray shine through her exemplary client service, long-lasting relationships and steady stream of referral business.



WILLIAM CLARKE

Owner at M & M Food Market
Fort McMurray & Grand Prairie

Skills Matrix Self-Assessment	
Accounting and Finance	5
Technology/E-Commerce	1
Procurement/Supply Chain	4
Research, Evaluation and Analytics	2
Land Development/Leasing Fundraising	3

William is in the 36-55 Age Group and represents the Grocery Retail sector.

When it comes to a person who has truly explored different industries and lived a life full of excitement and challenges, one name stands out: Will Clarke. This family guy has left no stone unturned as he ventured into various fields, showcasing his versatility and determination. From military service to running a small Marketing Agency, and now as a franchisee of two M&M locations, Will's journey is nothing short of awe-inspiring.

Will's diverse background begins with his time in the military. The military life instilled in him discipline, leadership skills and a strong work ethic. It provided a solid foundation for his future endeavors, teaching him the value of perseverance and the ability to adapt to any situation.

Following his military service, Will explored the world of aircraft mechanics. The intricate machinery and the thrill of being responsible for the safety of the aircraft fascinated him. However, his thirst for knowledge and new experiences led him to transition into the role of a land surveyor. This change allowed him to explore the great outdoors while utilizing his technical skills.

Will's journey didn't stop there. He found himself drawn to the world of power engineering, where he delved into the complexities of managing and maintaining power systems. His determination to continuously challenge himself led to yet another unexpected venture: a vending machine business. Will also stepped into the realm of radio and billboard sales honing his communications and negotiation skills. He also embarked in an adventure with heavy equipment sales. Will's ability to connect with people and understand their needs made him a successful heavy equipment salesman, further adding to his impressive portfolio.

Currently, Will is a franchisee of two M&M locations. With his natural affinity for business and his genuine love for people, Will continues to make a positive impact on the communities he serves.

Will's journey is a testament to the power of curiosity, resilience and embracing opportunities. He has learned that perspective is acquired through experience and scarping your knees. His willingness to venture into uncharted territories has shaped him into the adaptable and insightful individual he is today.

So here's to Will Clarke - the fearless explorer, the dedicated family man and the embodiment of someone who never shies away from embracing the unknown.