

Suspension of Senior Municipal Officials Sparks Mixed Reactions

Political parties in Metsimaholo in the Free State Province have expressed mixed reactions following the suspension of the Municipal Managers and other senior managers in the hung local municipality of Metsimaholo in Sasolburg.

The African National Congress (ANC) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) welcomed the decision of the Council to suspend these managers during its sitting last week while the Democratic Alliance (DA) has lambasted this decision. The suspended officials are the Municipal Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Technical Director, Director of Urban Planning and LED, and the Director of Social Services.

Municipal Spokesperson Dr Gino Alberts confirmed the suspension of these senior officials saying they have been placed on precautionary suspension as a result of alleged irregular procurement for security services at the municipality.

“These senior managers have been given seven days to make representations to the council giving reasons why they are not supposed to be suspended. The Council will reconvene again after 14 days to entertain or discuss the representations by the senior managers,” said Alberts.

Bassie Motloun has been appointed

as the Acting Municipal Manager. ANC Fezile Dabi Regional Secretary, Thabo Mabasa, said these senior managers are alleged to have been part of the bid adjudication committee, that may have not followed SCM Regulations in concluding this bid. “Council resolved on temporary appointments while it considers representation from suspended senior managers, such representation to be tabled in a special council meeting to be convened within the next 7 days,” said Mabasa. He added that the ANC wishes to express its disappointment with the DA, in particular its Executive, for failure to play oversight on the administration. Further, the DA support of maladministration, systematic corruption and forever appetite of hiding corruption under carpet.

“The ANC wish to express its appreciation to all parties in the Municipal Council who have put aside their political difference in saving our residents from this kleptocratic DA Municipality that has subjected our residents to poor service delivery ranging from contaminated and lack of adequate water supply mostly in Deneysville and Oranjeville, lack of maintenance of our cemeteries, sewer spillages, non-maintenance of green,” added Mabasa. In welcoming the

suspension of these senior officials, EFF heavily criticized the ANC for what it called sensationalism in celebrating the decision of the Council to suspend them. “However, the Economic Freedom Fighters has noted acts of sensationalism and bogus heroic status coming from members of the African National Congress on the sanction given to the bovementioned officials. Their conduct of celebrating acts to uproot corruption is highly outside the ANC DNA,” said EFF Regional Chairperson April Motaung.

He alleged that the ANC turned a blind eye on a number of irregularities in the municipality while it was within its powers to act. “In fact, the Economic Freedom Fighters regards the ANC and the current DA establishment as the same. Both parties thrive their existence on corruption and poor service delivery. Both parties echo and display a distasteful identity of Anti-Blackness,” said Motaung. He added that the EFF has written to the current Council to request an inquest and investigation into Unauthorised, Irregular, Fruitless and Wasteful Expenditure to commence.

The DA called this suspension a clear attempt by the ANC/EFF coalition to sabotage the positive changes implemented by the DA. “It is evident that they are more concerned about suspending officials who do not slavishly follow ANC/EFF instructions and then promoting their own cadres. While the DA welcomes the opportunity to clarify any misconceptions



**EFF Regional Chairperson
- Cllr April Motaung**



**ANC Fezile Dabi Regional
Secretary - Thabo Mabasa**



**Acting Municipal Manager
- Bassie Motloun**

surrounding the appointment of the security service providers, we emphasise the importance of transparency and proper procedures during the investigation,” said DA Spokesperson Paul Kotze. He added that the DA’s priority remains that of restoring trust and confidence in local government by implementing effective and efficient service delivery measures to meet the needs of the residents.

Metsimaholo budget finally approved

After fierce opposition to the approval of the new budget for Metsimaholo Local Municipality, finally it passed the test. On Friday the 30th June 2023, Municipal Council passed the budget for the financial year 2023/2024.

Presenting the budget Executive Mayor Jeff Zwane said the budget aims at fast tracking service delivery and bringing better services for Metsimaholo residents.

“The Budget also aims at not only promoting but also attract businesses that will invest and contribute to job creation and sustainability,” said the Executive Mayor.

He emphasized that this year’s budget speaks to good governance, transparency and accountability. The budget will address core service delivery challenges and ensure the residents of Metsimaholo receive services.

Outlining the budget, the Executive Mayor pointed out that the total

operating revenue for 2023/24 financial year is R1,790 billion, which is an increase of R229 million from last year.

The total Capital budget for 2023/24 financial year is R204 million which indicates a decline of R34.8 million compared to the previous adjusted budget.

As also outlined in the budget, the Municipality’s free basic services program currently is intended to support 13 000 indigent households with 6kiloliters of free water, 50kilowatt of free electricity, free sanitation, and free waste removal, as well as R50.00 subsidy on property rates.

Of those 13 000, our indigent register currently stands at 10 738, whilst the budget caters for 13 000 indigent households.

The percentage increase in Eskom bulk tariffs has increased to 18.7% compared with last year’s 17.8% to municipalities.

Based on the Eskom increases, our customer tariff has increase by 15,1 %, as from the 1st of July 2023.

The Municipality did apply to NERSA for revised tariffs. The property rates, waste removal and sanitation tariffs will increase by 5,3%.

R119 million has been allocated for repairs and maintenance of infrastructure. Out of that total, it will be spent as follows:

- Electricity infrastructure has been allocated R36,6 million, part of these funds will

be catering for the following critical matters:

- Upgrading of street lighting and high mast lights, networks in Sasolburg, Deneysville and Oranjeville.

- Installation of High Mast lights in Themba Khubeka.

- Installation of diesel generators in Deneysville and Oranjeville abstractions

- Fencing of Eletrical Substations in Zamdela, Sasolburg, Deneysville and Oranjeville.

- Replacement of substation doors in

all towns

An amount of R30,1 million has been allocated for Road Infrastructure, the following will be the

focus:

- Re-sealing of roads in Sasolburg and Vaalpark

- Re-sealing of roads in Zamdela

- Re-sealing of roads in Deneysville and Oranjeville

- New gravel roads in Zamdela Extensions, Refengkgotso, Themba Khubeka and Metsimaholo.

The budget also caters for the following:

- Themba Khubeka electrification for R29 780 000

- Oranjeville Wastewater Treatment Plant for R10 617 000

- Oranjeville water treatment plant phase 2 for R10 000 000

- Refengkgotso Wastewater Works for R9 000 000

- Construction of 2000 toilet structures Phase 1, R 12 500 000

Community services has been allocated R5 000 000 for a landfill site and R1 000 000 for a lowbed truck. An amount of R500 000 has been allocated for the Fire Department call

centre system.