

# GEORGE MUNICIPALITY

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 30 MAY 2019: BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF  
GEORGE MUNICIPALITY: ALDERMAN MELVIN NAIK**

---

Speaker

Aldermen

Councillors

Municipal Manager

Senior management

The public in the conference room

The media

Good morning to you all and welcome to this special council meeting.

It is indeed a privilege to deliver the Mayoral Address to Council today. As we are gathered here we are all aware of the ever-increasing challenges and trying times that we find ourselves in. We are being challenged to deliver and maintain the rendering of good service to all our citizens.

Every moment more is expected of us whilst especially the financial resources are being stretched beyond its limits. The struggles we are in today is developing the strengths we need for our tomorrows and these difficult roads often leads to beautiful destinations.

It's my opinion that if we keep on being persistent we will get what we aim for and if we are consistent, we will keep it.

The city of George is positioning itself to be a pacesetting smart city and we therefore have to focus so much more on our resiliency- our capacity to adapt and grow in the face and in the midst of many anticipated and even unforeseen physical, social and economic challenges.

It will be our city's resiliency that will ensure that we are better equipped to handle increasing demands resulting from growing urban populations.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

It is an undeniable fact that the way we live and especially where we live, is changing at a fast pace. The total population in the city of George has grown significantly since the last official census in 2011. People from around the country are flocking into and to our city which in itself poses a great challenge to our city's infrastructure.

As a growing and developing city the challenge remains that we are obliged to build, expand, maintain and upgrade our existing infrastructure to meet the growing demand not only of the population but to ensure economic development and investments.

This will ensure that our city keep moving forward whilst anticipating the needs of tomorrow. If its managed well urbanisation can bring significant benefits for business.

Avoiding the potential negative economic consequences of insufficient or failing infrastructure should therefore be considered a core business for us and also a societal concern – one that requires long-term planning and investment and thank you to the civil department for submitting masterplans in this regard.

Reprioritising our goals should therefore include more emphasis on growing and maintaining our infrastructure as it is a critical enabler for productivity and sustainable economic growth and contributes to human development and poverty reduction.

In contextualising our challenge- we have to renew and expand but simultaneously maintain the existing infrastructure- a twofold approach that poses quite a challenge to our ailing resources currently.

Strategic infrastructure investment in water provision, waste management, maintenance of roads and public transportation are crucial service delivery elements that will pave the way for economic growth.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ GROWTH**

Job creation and sustainable jobs are the result of economic development whilst jobs are the foundation of any economy. We are aware of the devastating impact that high levels of unemployment can have on our families, communities, city, region, province and country.

Although it is a global phenomenon, it results in poverty, social exclusion, inequality, crime and social instability.

Within the confines of our country and even our city, we have seen an increase in dependency on social grants.

The levels of education and skills are in direct relation to employment opportunities and earning. As the Local government we need to ensure that our policies are appropriately aligned to ignite the creation of an enabling business and economic development environment.

We need to ensure that we do our utmost to create a positive environment for business to prosper through a positive investment climate, comprehensive support for SMME's and the informal sector, removal of barriers to enter the markets and infrastructure capacity.

We need to strengthen our partnership with business to improve awareness of self and other employment opportunities. The development of entrepreneurship should start at and should be accelerated and schools, FET Colleges, universities, business chambers and local government should be actively involved.

Economic growth resulting in poverty reduction cannot be an isolated responsibility of a solitary department or sub-department, or sphere of government.

It calls for a stronger and more committed integrated approach with business, government departments and NGO's joining forces, skills and capacities to ensure results.

We need to facilitate the harnessing of the existing knowledge and skills within the broader George community. There is still a significant percentage of our population that is socially and economically marginalised by amongst other things lower levels of education or inappropriate skills.

We need to build and especially facilitate sustainable social networks as it is imperative for sustained development and poverty reduction. This concept speaks of connectedness that increases the ability of people, organisations and institutions to work together and expand their access to a wider range of resources.

We need to execute our role as facilitator, integrator, developmental advocate and service delivery agent to optimise the implementation of an integrated economic development within our city.

We need to implement the basics of building social capital, building human capital, a spatial development framework which sets out an integrated

social, economic and environmental framework for the future of our city, a micro economic strategy with the goal of improving the livelihood and quality of life of all citizens.

We therefore cannot go on doing business as usual. We have to cultivate and improve working relations between government, business and civil society with the involvement of all our partners which goes further than the mere articulation of visions and frameworks and extend to active involvement at all levels of project and programme development, implementation and evaluation.

## **ILLEGAL DUMPING**

George has over the years established itself as a city that is environmentally conscious as reflected by our strategic objective of keeping our city clean. Today however it seems as if it's no longer uncommon to see piles of waste, used household products being dumped by the roadside or in non-designated sites. This growing trend hinders us from attaining our objective as a clean city and environment. Although this practise is unlawful we are experiencing a rise in this practise.

Not only is it damaging our environment, increasing the risk of a fire hazard, whilst diminishing property value and negatively impact tourism within our city.

Illegal dumping puts entire communities at risk as it can lead to the blockage of the storm water drainage system thereby turning it into breeding ground for diseases and a cause for flooding.

Annually more money is being committed to cleaning and clearing illegal dumping sites, fixing natural areas and infrastructure affected by illegal dumping.

We need an improved cooperation and committed collective responsibility to address this challenge. Many at times the people that engage in illegal dumping activities do so knowingly and are always on the lookout of places where the environmental regulatory authorities are hardly visible.

We need to improve our law enforcement strategy as it is fundamental in stopping illegal dumping. As a city we therefore have to enforce our illegal dumping by-laws by clearly outlining the penalties and consequences if caught to stress the gravity of the activity

We also need to focus more on Outreach (which has started) through education and awareness creation in affected communities as it can significantly aid in solving the illegal dumping problem. Not only does it highlight the adverse effects of the activity, but it also spurs positive involvement, and can increase the number of residents who volunteer to monitor and report any instances of illegal dumping.

## **GENERAL CONCERNS**

Speaker it is noticed that we are spending quite a huge amount of money on the rental of vehicles. I call on Mr. Botha to engage with senior management to really make a concerted effort to curb excessive spending.

Another concern is the spending on security services. We have exceeded on what we have budgeted for. I call on management to investigate the market on what can we implement to spend less money.

Together with this I urgently call on the MM to ensure proper safe and secure access control to especially the main building but at all our buildings.

As discussed in the mayoral planning session I'm not satisfied with internal communication between different departments and are awaiting an approach plan on to better communication internally.

Than Speaker I identified a few risks that I just feel we need to address urgently through the administration and that is Staff Capacity & Competency, I am aware that we have still a backlog on vacant positions, but thank you corporate and HR that put measures in place to speed up the process, competency in certain positions is questionable and I call on the senior management to put measures in place to address the competency levels in your various departments.

In some sections compliance seems to pose a risk, this is unacceptable. Senior management should please consult Thobeka, regarding the SDBIP and also our internal audit office is willing to assist in this regard.

Lastly an urgent call is to put measures in place that our disaster management office gets functional. We enter the winter season and we don't know what to expect.

To some this may sound as a lamentation but have to address the risks if we want to move to the next level of excellent service delivery. To the administration, I know there is a lot of short comings but please try your

utmost best just to do what you have been appointed for, take responsibility and accountability for what you need to do.

We can do more.

Thank you.