

SPEAKER

ALDERMEN

ALL COUNCILLORS

MUNICIPAL MANAGER

SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

THE PUBLIC

THE MEDIA

Good morning and a warm welcome to everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to address council today. As the 3rd largest municipality in the western cape and the 4th most important contributor to provincial employment among the 25 municipalities in the western cape, we as George municipality are continuously striving, against all odds, to provide the core basic services as per our constitutional mandate. That's why we can report that 98% of the people of George have access to pipe water, 98% of people have access to electricity, 100% refuse removal to households and 98% access to sewerage.

Notwithstanding all the challenges George municipality has consistently record higher economic growth than the district economy, the past 5 years with an average growth of 2,64% p.a. (same period Stellenbosch record 2,12%, and Drakenstein 2,06%) We have showed impressive resilience during a tough challenging period for South Africa. The in-migration of people to the city and the constant growth of informal dwellings place an enormous financial burden on this municipality.

Our draft budget is evident to this where we have to procure R344 million on our capital budget for 2019/20 of which the majority of that funding will be for installation of new and maintenance of old infrastructure. We need to bear in mind that we have limit own funding at our disposal. People going of the grid does not makes it easier as we are experiencing a drop-in electricity purchases which compels this municipality to look for alternative income sources and we need to maximise our income through efficiencies and the way we do business.

Speaker at this point I want to congratulate our administration, CFO and your team, Business insider have brought out an article on South Africa's most financially independent municipalities, meaning we not that reliant on funding from national government, George and Theewaterskloof are the only two municipalities in the western cape that forms part of 28 municipalities nationally that are the most financially independent from national government. Dankie ons is finansieel gesond.

Back to some of our challenges.

Everyone is aware that people need jobs, that is we take the approach to invest in our infrastructure so we can create the environment wherein jobs can be created. We cannot expect investment if we do not have the necessary infrastructure, in my view no infrastructure no jobs. It is of utmost importance that infrastructure is in place so we can for example continue with our exports in Cheese & curd, coal briquettes, ovoids and fuels, clothing accessories, equipment for photographic lab screens, fruit & vegetables. None of these exports would be possible if we had dysfunctional infrastructure.

That's why I'm proud to say that the city of George can ensure investors that you will have access to clean, potable water that is adequate for both agricultural and industrial use. We are blessed that our dam level is at 89%

But we must contribute to skills development. Although it is not our core function to provide jobs we must get back to the drawing board for example as far as our EPWP is concerned. Everyone is aware that the administration has been battling to exercise the EPWP as per our protocol agreement.

That is why it has been decided in collaboration with the administration that EPWP programs will be reduced to a maximum of only 8 programs, this financial year, and the programs include training in (Fire & Disaster management, Multi skills development(plumbers, carpentry, tiling, electricity and brick laying), Agricultural food security projects, ECD programme with the focus to assist our municipal creches, Social Assistance development programmes, Municipal intern development(in finance, corporate service and human resource), deforestation project(to provide training in Vallie), local hospitality training(tourism).

We had engagements with training institutions like Africa skills, NMU, South Cape College for assistance in this regard.

Speaker please allow me now to give a brief overview of operational business within our various directorates.

Community Services

in community services the land fill project is high on the agenda, it has been reported that Dr Eddie Hanekom from Provincial Department Environmental services will visit George in the next week to give a presentation in this regard. Speaker I don't know the details but apparently there is a new technique for land fill sites and it is reported that we will be the first municipality where the DC compaction technique will be implemented.

Upgrades continue at Gwaiing

Operational

1. Many temporary workers were appointed and incorporated

The sick trees are a big challenge - every weekend a couple are taken down or made safe 4. Funds have been made available by Dept. Environmental Affairs for weed control of dam and cat river

Two parks superintendents were eventually appointed which will bring great relief

This department has an urgent need for weed control

Shortage of management staff and office space remains a challenge

Civil Engineering

The major projects currently underway includes the Outeniqua Waste Water Treatment Works, various roads upgrading project and the long-awaited Raising of the Garden Route Dam project was handed over in March 2019 with construction due to start in April 2019.

The upgrading of gravel roads has started in Pacaltsdorp and the procurement process of small contractors for the upgrading of various gravel roads in Thembaletu is currently underway with construction due to start in April. The Civil Engineering Department remains upbeat about improving on the previous year's performance insofar spending of the capital budget, despite the personnel shortages in the Project Management Unit."

Electrotechnical Services

The capital budget figures below are based on the February 2019 Section 71 Report, but with orders placed at the time, also considered. Only the 5 areas contributing most to the capital budget (77%) are listed below. The Total is inclusive of ALL capital projects, and not just the 5 areas listed.

	Capital Budget Area	Adjusted Budget	Spent to Date	% Expenditure
1.	Expansion of 66 kV Network	R 12.9 million	R 9.4 million	73
2.	Energy Management	R 7.9 million	R 3.5 million	44
3.	Electrification	R 10.8 million	R 2.2 million	20
4.	Upgrading & Expansion 11 kV Network	R 3.4 million	R 1.7 million	50
5.	Streetlighting & Planning	R 5.4 million	R 3.7 million	69
Total All Capital		R 52.8 million	R 26.9 million	51

Notes on the Capital Budget.

Expenditure is under control. Expenditure on Electrification has been slow up to now, but all contracts have been awarded and it is foreseen that the budget will be spent by the end of the financial year.

Human Settlements

All housing projects on the capital budget are currently in process and will be completed before financial year-end.

The Bungalow Housing Project currently rolled out by HAS Consultants (Private Developer) is progressing at an acceptable pace with ± 20 of the 200 units having been completed. 3 of these units (with their title deeds) have been handed over by the Provincial MEC for Human Settlements to the owners in a process facilitated by the Ward Councillor.

Grant of R600 000 was received to compile a Human Settlements Plan. This will pave the way for the Social Housing process to be rolled out.

We as council will have to apply our mind on measures and strategies on how we will proceed in future to contribute to growing housing demand.

CHALLENGES

- The funding shortage for the provision of bulk infrastructure is a major constrain for housing development. The delay emanating from the shortage of funding has a direct impact on the construction and handover of housing units.
- The complications within the UISP project relating to the relocation of beneficiaries, the stoppages of contractors by communities *inter alia* result in the slow progress on the UISP program.

Speaker this is but a few of the operational business in our municipality. I can proudly say that regardless of all the challenges we are facing this municipality still delivers due to dedicated staff members.

Speaker I know we are in election mode now can I therefore request that we downscale on our council commitments to grant our councillors more time in the field for the up coming election in on the 8 May 2019. I don't want the business of council to be used as an excuse when parties loose out in the election. For all the political parties I wish you well in your campaigns, all is for one common purpose and that is to serve the people of S.A.