**GEORGE MUNICIPALITY**

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR**

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 30 JANUARY 2020: BY THE ACTING EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF GEORGE MUNICIPALITY: CLLR CHARLOTTE CLARKE**

SPEAKER

ALDERMEN

COUNCILLORS

MUNICIPAL MANAGER

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN THE PUBLIC GALLERY

THE MEDIA

Honourable Speaker

I would like to welcome you all to this the 1st Council Meeting on Thursday, 30 January 2020. I hope that you are all well rested.

In commencing this address, I am humbled by the mammoth task and real challenges that lies before us as a Council and Municipality. Looking around us, we are being confronted with the reality of an uphill journey-one where our challenges are sapping the confidence. This journey is not about short cuts or settling for less. It is within this context that we as public representatives need to display courage and character to continue serving our communities as life shrinks or expand in proportion to one’s courage.

We need to choose hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. We have to re-affirm our enduring spirit and to carry forward our commitment to serve and to serve to the best of our ability.

We remain a growing city-we remain a sought after destination- we remain a city that people want to live in- we remain a city that people want to work in- we remain a city where people want to do business in- we remain a city where people want to invest in- we remain a city where people want to study in- we remain a city where people want to play sport- we remain a city where people want to spend and enjoy their holiday in. Looking around us we realise that almost everywhere we look, there is work to be done especially with regard to service delivery.

The demands are growing and are indeed intensifying and we cannot lose sight of our commitment to serve and to deliver to our people. This is the time that we need to remember that there is nothing so satisfying and gratifying to the spirit, so defining to our character than giving our all to the huge task that lies before us.

At this point let me remind us all of our objective to develop and establish George as a city for a sustainable future. We have seen the successful completion of the rising of the Garden Route dam wall accompanied by rain to raise the level of water in the dam. Let’s look to the bright side of our town, how blessed we are to have received the much-needed rain. Our dam is full capacity.

We have seen the improvement to receive an unqualified audit opinion- we have seen the improvement of the matric results of 2019- we have heard about the increase in student numbers at our Further and Higher Education and Training institutions for 2020 study year to mention but a few. This prompts us to move forward as the road ahead is unfolding.

In my capacity as Acting Executive Mayor, I call on us all not to lose sight of our reason for being here and to serve, irrespective of being surrounded by sometimes daunting challenges. We now have a greater responsibility and need all of your support. Given the fact that we appear to be in turmoil we need to refrain from becoming emotional and concentrate on the task at hand. As councillors we took an oath to uphold the laws of the country and therefore we need to allow the process to take its course. As councillors we have a responsibility to our communities first, and as a municipality we need to focus on service delivery and put personal politics aside.

It is through challenges that we grow, through challenges that our innate potential is unlocked, through challenges that we grow- through challenges that we evaluate our approach- through challenges that we put our resources together and optimise them. Our challenges however are also our opportunity to re-commit, to re-focus- and to direct more of our efforts. Before us lies the challenges of possible loadshedding- of illegal dumping- of maintaining and improving the delivery of basic services to our communities. Being under constant pressure of the influx of people thinking that the Garden Route is affluent and the answer to their prayers, thereby putting pressure on our economy and our resources.

I want to call on the Administration to ensure that they stay committed and deliver on the committed budgeted projects, thus improving the lives of our citizens. As a collective we can make inroads towards the objectives and goals that we have set for ourselves **only** if we start focussing on the solutions and not on individual aspirations.

**Let us use 2020 as the perfect vision for our town’s as opposed to 20/20 hind site.**