MAYORAL ADDRESS: COUNCIL MEETING 22 AUGUST 2019

SPEAKER

ALDERMEN

ALL COUNCILLORS

MUNICIPAL MANAGER

SENIOR MANAGERS

ALL STAFF

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN THE PUBLIC GALLERY

MEDIA

GOOD MORNING TO YOU ALL

Speaker it is indeed a honour to address council today. Let me 1st congratulate the DA on winning yesterdays by election in Knysna. We wish them well with all their endeavours.

Colleagues last week Friday National Treasury brought out a statistic on which we can proud ourselves, George Municipality have been announced as the 3rd best municipality in the country on financial stability. I attribute this accolade to constant hard work and dedication. Thank you to every official for your contribution towards this organisation. You really have made us proud.

Accolades such as this propels me to do more irrespective of the challenges we are facing. I said it in my last address that we will work tirelessly to ensure that we will not receive negative audit reports anymore. That’s why I want to thank officials for adhering to this call. Thank you, JP and Sheryl for your guidance Monday morning on what needs to be done.

We also need to take note of the audit committee’s recommendations and act on it.

I welcome the launch of the new pacaltsdorp shopping centre. Hope this will be an opportunity to also address the unemployment in the area.

We are all aware that the diverse and intensifying challenges are part and parcel of a city who is moving towards the next level. It is however of cardinal importance that we ensure that we maintain a standard of service delivery that cannot be compromised.

The growing of our city in a collective responsibility and we need to stay committed and focussed on our mandate to deliver quality basic services to our people. Growing our city challenges us especially as to our existing infrastructure and human capital capacity. As a collective we dare not retreat from the challenges that we face, but should reach out to one another across all limitations and barriers to ensure that our city stays on track in becoming the best medium sized city in the country.

Speaker I want to pause here for a second. Tuesday we had a feedback meeting in ward 15. Yes, sometimes we say the community just want to complain but some of the issues raised are valid points with merit and I want to request the administration please to attend when queries or complaints are logged and please if an issue can’t be addressed immediately tell the community.

Speaker I would like to pass my condolences to the family of that young boy who tragically lost his life last Saturday in Thembalethu, near the All Brick site, when he touched illegal connected electricity. This is one life too many. Councillors can we all please assist to call on all the citizens of George to refrain from illegal connections, this is dangerous and can lead to death as in this case. Children should be allowed to play and not get hurt by mistakes of adults.

Speaker I attended on Tuesday the monthly engagement with the business chamber. A point on the agenda was the state of the economy. For me it was scary to listen to Mr. David Gracy saying that it’s only a matter of time before our country will be dumped into junk status and this is the reality we are hovering on the brink of that status and, then the distant possibility of the IMF waiting for a visit from our country’s leadership. Personally, I hope we do not have to go down this route.

our economy is not growing, it is not producing jobs, our major capital owners are refusing to invest in our economy, the idea of foreign investment begins to sound like a pipe dream, there is so much negativity around us, the only people where I can see where we can invest time, labour, expertise, entrepreneurship agilities and are daring to succeed is the small business sector.

Yesterday I addressed a group of small business owners who have started a small business forum, listening to them and the challenges they made me realise that we must do more. Yes, I know we must work within the legislative frameworks to procure goods and services but we as council must consider on how do we

incorporate the small business sector to become part of the main stream of the economy.

Needless to mention the one sector of society that is suffering the most is our youth. Our economy is not creating sufficient jobs to absorb this productive sector of our population. This matter is compounded by the lack of skills amongst the disadvantaged communities in particular.

Currently the main economic sectors in George are**:** Finance, insurance, real estate and business services (26.4%), wholesale and retail trade, catering and accommodation (18.5%), manufacturing (14.7%), transport, storage and communication (11.9%), general government (8.9%), community, social and personal services (6.3%), construction (6.0%), agriculture, forestry and fishing (3.7%).

What we don’t know is where does the emerging small business sector feature? I don’t know.

Mr. Botha and speaker, can we arrange a date for a workshop to see how we can accommodate small businesses within a legal framework. In this regard is it necessary that you involve all relevant stakeholders such as financial institutions.

Speaker allow me to give feedback regarding service delivery in some of our sectors.

**Civil**

The past 2018/19 financial year was not the easiest in terms of spending the CES capital budget and the main reason for the underspending was the moratorium on all SCM procurement processes after the adverse AG findings of 207/18. Procurement was stopped in November 2018 and resumed in March 2019 bringing the total capital expenditure to approximately 70%. This year however, the CES directorate aims to achieve more than 90% spending of its available approximate R200 million. Major projects include the construction of the Mechanical Works at the Outeniqua Waste Water Treatment Works. Tenders closed in July 2019 and the total construction cost will be in excess of R100 million with construction due to start in October 2019 if no appeals are received. The Garden Route dam construction is progressing well with due completion programmed for December 2019.

The Upgrading of gravel roads are also progressing well and construction already started with a total of nearly R12million allocated for this purpose whilst other roads related projects include more than R8 million for reseal and rehabilitation of existing bituminous surfaced roads. The total available funds for GIPTN roads upgrade projects amounts to just over R24 million and the directorate are happy to announce that Contractors have already been appointed for these projects.

This year also saw the directorate making use of MS Projects to schedule and track progress on all capital projects that ranges from the procurement of tools and equipment to major multi million rand projects. The approximate R200 million worth of projects consist of more than 85 individual projects spread over more than 150 budget votes that makes it a mammoth undertaking to implement all the projects with the limited number of warm bodies in the department. The directorate do however remain optimistic that spending this year’s budget is possible with team of dedicated officials to ensure George Residents receive the highest quality of services.”

**Electrotechnical Services**

Part of the funding provided by the Department of Energy (DoE) for Demand Side Management needs to be spent on public awareness towards saving energy. This year’s public awareness campaign happened in the form of a school’s drama competition called “World of Tomorrow” that ended with a gala evening on Friday, 2 August. Schools had to present various forms of energy saving in drama format.

George Municipality received positive SABC news coverage on the events on Sunday evening, 4 August. Although news coverage in itself sounds a minute incident in the success of an Electricity Directorate, it is a significant building block towards a better relationship with the DoE, from which we hope to receive continued and increased grants towards energy saving projects.

**Corporate Services**

* Thusong Centre Thembalethu – Blueberry Farm Project:  **80 unemployed women have been employed on a contract for one year** – **started in July 2019.**  **107 women started in August 2019.**
* Mr. Tommy Gozongo is also facilitating a disability group at the Thusong centre with a sowing project.
* HR: 124 Posts have been filled from May 2019 to 30 July 2019
* HR: 170 Posts (lower t-grade) were evaluated and the final audit outcome was implemented on 1 August 2019
* Civic Centre: Not a heritage site and a service provider was appointed to replace the roof which will not necessarily infringe on the character of the building.  Project will start in September 2019

**Finance**

They are in the final stages of completing the 2018/19 Annual Financial Statements and are positive that they will meet the deadline of   
31 August 2019.  They are planning to do the first draft on Friday 23 August 2019.

The Auditor General’s team is arriving at George Municipality on Monday 26 August 2019 to start with their audit process.

**Human Settlements**

I have requested The Human Settlements Directorate to arrange a Housing Indaba/summit including key stakeholders from the various sphere of Government and the private sector to craft a shared vision for human settlements development.  The theme for the Indaba is:

**“Working Together to Build Sustainable Human Settlements”**

Discussions will centre on ways to create opportunities for middle income, **rental** units, we will also engage on alternative building materials/resources and through this all encourage investment in this sector.

The Western Cape Department of Human Settlements ran a GPS enhancement to the Database at Informal Settlements in Thembalethu to obtain GPS coordinates to allow spatial mapping of households.  The idea was to collect and record information on all social, economic and infrastructure assets in each settlement.

The project has the following impact:

* Two staff members of George Municipality being trained – one Remote Pilots Licence Course Training and one Drone Proficiency Theory and Practical Course
* George Municipality will be provided with a drone and iPad to be used to produce aerial imagery
* Capacitation of municipal staff
* George Municipality will be provided with GIS mapping, aerial imagery and socio-economic reports to be used for planning and upgrade of settlements
* Temporary jobs created for community members in areas surveyed

In closing let us remember that we all are but servants capable of doing and achieving more than we currently are. The fruit of our endeavours will always be just beyond our reach.... urging us to stretch ourselves to reach it. I therefor call on all of us to realise the why in ourselves. We were created to be here and serving in a time like this.

Thank you