

MAYOR'S SPEECH 2013/14 BUDGET

Budget address, 31st of MAY 2013

Delivered by
The Honourable Mayor Motlalepule Joey Mochela

Ngwathe Local Municipality, striving to restore hope, trust to local government, time to Stand up and Serve!!!

The honourable Speaker, Cllr Philemon Ndayi
Chief Whip Cllr Dolly Vandisi
Leaders of the Opposition
Honourable Councillors
The Municipal Manager and Officials
Honoured Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr Speaker the 2012 December, National Congress of the ruling party that was held in Mangaung marked a watershed mile stone that the organisation has travelled, and more importantly the president of the ruling party after all have been said and done he said I quote ***"inde'lentlhela esiyihambayo, kwasho Mandela ku balandeli bakhe, wathi so hlangana nge freedom day"*** Mr Speaker in simple terms I mean as Ngwathe Councillors we have a journey and developmental decisions to take in the best interest of the council and our communities.

Mr Speaker this year and this time marks the second year of this council and there is a marathon to be ran, honourable councillor's we need to pull up our sleeves and spare no effort as we approach this task ahead of us.

INTRODUCTION

Mr Speaker, every community activist and true democrat is seized with a similar sense of eternal optimism. We are hopeful and confident about the future of our municipality of Ngwathe Local Municipality, and believe that, going forward; things can only change for the better.

Mr Speaker and fellow councillors, once more we gather here today on the end of yet another year and have a glimpse of the morrow that the next year may bring. Indeed it is in times such as these that we look back on the journey we have travelled thus far and say yes, maybe we may have been overconfident at times and now are daunted by the challenging movement forward. But, as Bruce Barton has so vividly put it; it is out of such fear that we may forge a new, clearer vision and a fresh hope.

In a few months' time the multitude of our people in our communities will stream to the polling stations across the length and breadth of our country to give a new mandate to a new contingent of leaders, Provincial and National.

It is this fresh hope and clear vision that must propel them to get involved in the affairs of their governance even beyond the poll date. I am aware that preparations for these elections are on course. Our area of jurisdiction, like all the others, has also played no small role in ensuring that this is indeed the case.

THE STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Delivering his State of the Nation Address few months ago, President Jacob Zuma identified a number of key priorities. These included a focus on basic education, the fight against crime and substance abuse, the need for anti-corruption measures to prevent fraud, a responsive health system, and job creation at scale, especially through the Expanded Public Works Programme, as well as good and quality services to our communities.

He said: "Our goal is clear. We want to have a country where millions more South Africans have decent employment opportunities, which have a modern Infrastructure and a vibrant economy and where the quality of life is high. We all have a responsibility to work hard to make this a reality."

But he also said that: "there have been lots of complaints over the past few months about local government". We took note of these focus areas as well as the concerns expressed by our President. We have not only heard what has been said, but our council has always been committed to addressing all of these challenges.

SERVICE DELIVERY – OUR CORE BUSINESS

As the Municipality, we are in the business of service delivery. We are the stewards of development, quality and sustainable services. When we begin to neglect this mandate, we place ourselves in a precarious position. We become vulnerable to justified criticism, and the people that we are supposed to serve moan and groan, and then act, sometimes not positively, other times with ghastly consequences.

It thus becomes important that we should, from time to time, examine our performance to see if we are successful or not in delivering on this mandate. Success and failure come in several forms.

But the most reliable yardstick for both is in the “yes” of the people. As the end beneficiaries of the services that we deliver, the people are better placed to judge us, to measure the quality of our work, and to pronounce on our performance as their servants in service delivery.

Mr Speaker the truth must be our daily medium of instruction in this council, if indeed all of us albeit political affiliation are keen to the development of our municipality.

Delivery of Water Services

Ladies and gentlemen, municipalities in South Africa face many challenges in providing effective water services to customers, especially with regard to the management of the wastewater treatment plants as well as the maintenance of good quality drinking water.

In this very municipality of ours we are all aware by now of the challenges and exaggerations that has surrounded questions with regard to the quality of our drinking water.

Within the context of threats of spillages and abattoirs waste water questions and insinuations were raised and made in various quarters, placing the quality of our drinking water in serious doubt in the public mind. Drinking water is a very important matter of life and death could easily have been turned into a factional sport of various sectional and political interests where the divide between fact and fiction are blurred with ghastly consequences for the people we serve.

Unlike other municipalities in South Africa that buy treated water from

Institutions such as Rand Water and other Water Authorities Ngwathe Local Municipality have been a water service provider for 4 of 5 towns excluding Heilbron.

This places a huge responsibility on our shoulders as we do not only have to monitor the distribution network but also have to keep a watchful eye on the treatment works and raw water qualities. Honourable councillor's the water issue; it is the fundamental matter that we need to also attend to it without spare of any effort, as the private vendors of water are increasing and tourists will soon runaway from our area, and this have a negative impact to our economy.

Mr Speaker the other services of the council are also important but I thought the water issue is very fundamental and significant to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Despite what I said fellow councillor's there is a sign of improvement on the above subject, however I think the efforts must be done to better the quality of this service and the availability thereof at certain areas remains a concern to date.

Auditor General Report

With regard to the management of municipal finance, Mr Speaker, it is Granted that our finances may not have been as healthy as we would want them to be, but we are definitely turning the situation around.

With the recent visit and tabling of the AUDIT OUTCOMES 2011/12 by the office of the Auditor General, it is clear that a lot has to be done, honourable councillors this matter needs our support to the officials in making sure that compliance, legislation and regulations are adhered to without excuses. We need to do our oversight responsibility fully equally without excuses.

Mr Speaker all senior management posts are filled and I have requested MM to tighten the seat belt as the 2013/14 is a CLEAN AUDIT YEAR of national treasury and equally as the municipality we can move from disclaimer to unqualified even clean audit if we all do our part, "together we can do more" officials alone won't and even councillor's alone will not make it, we need each other, now going forward for the betterment of our people.

Budget and public participation

Mr Speaker the public participation was done as a norm and a must to have process and this time it was done in 19 out of 20 wards of Ngwathe area of jurisdiction. Mr Speaker the councillors and the officials were present at the venue – Sandersville hall, but the meeting did not materialise, this tendency of groupings taking advantage of important meetings of the community to advance their personal hatred and interest in the expense of the innocent communities need to stop, a general meeting should be arranged and speaker we must attend to genuine issues of this section – Sandersville.

Projects

Honourable Speaker, most our projects are ongoing. The capital budget will be funded by MIG and DME grants and external borrowings; due to financial constraints, the municipality will not be able to fund any capital projects internally. However, great strides have been made through the presence and involvement of the PMU. The establishment of this unit has enabled us to see all obstacles on our way going forward, in our capital budget. When I started, I mentioned Bruce Barton quote “clearer vision and fresh hope” this is what I meant.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker as we adopt and approve the 2013-14 budget as tabled before us today, our approach must never change from being a developmental one. I am proud to say that the budget presented before you has been scrutinized and has been given the green light as being a credible document, since the provincial treasury visited our municipality to ensure that we aligned this budget to guidelines provided

LASTLY, Mr Speaker allow me to edge all honourable councillors regardless of your political party to join hands in building the “home of harmony prosperity and growth”

Mr Speaker as we adopt and approve the 2013-14 budget as tabled, let’s be developmental in our approach.

I THANK YOU ALL

