

**The Budget and State of the City Address of the Executive Mayor, Alderlady Mapule Mataboge, for the JB Marks Municipality, on Friday, June 11, 2021 at 09:00 in the Dan Tloome Council Chamber.**

Acting Speaker of Council, Cllr Makoe  
Members of the Mayoral Committee  
Chief Whip of the Council, Cllr Matsapola  
The Chairperson of MPAC, Cllr Makousa  
Chairpersons of Portfolio Committees  
Esteemed fellow Councillors  
The Administrator – Advocate Dineo Mongwaketsi  
Acting Municipal Manager, Mr Ofentse Masibi  
All Senior Managers and Officials of Council  
Distinguished guests; and  
Residents of Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp, and  
Members of the media;

It is a real honour and privilege to stand before you today, and deliver all into one, the Budget and the State of the City Speech.

One year ago, I had no idea that I will be standing here and perform this task. I owe my new position to my political party, the ANC, who nominated me, as well as to you Councillors, who elected me.

The ANC teaches its members and leaders alike, *Through the Eye of the Needle*, that they must be the servants of the people. Although, the period will be short, but this is what will inform my approach to this position.

This will not be a very long speech, and is deliberate. The reason for this is because I am now in office for less than a month, and can report to you, that we have a lot of work ahead of us.

As we meet this morning, we are mindful of the reports that says, as a province, we are in the midst of a third wave of Coronavirus infections. As a municipality, we have reason to be concerned, as the number of infections and related deaths, are also on the rise.

The MEC of Health, in his media statement yesterday, expressed his concern about the rate of infections in the province. As a reason, for the increase in infections, he said the people have let their guard down.

In this battle against the virus, it is a given that a person, will become tired, because it is taking so long to overcome it. However, think about it? In a way, things are a little better than what it was, last year the same time.

For example, we now have vaccines available, and the process to vaccinate the world population as a whole, including residents of our own country and municipality has started. To every resident of our municipality, I say, let us register in order for us to receive our injection. This will help to limit the power of the virus. At the same time, continue to wear a mask, sanitise or wash your hands on a regular basis, and keep the distance required.

I wish us, to take a minute and pause, to remember the infected and the affected. Every time, they give us the numbers of those who lost the battle against the pandemic, we must not forget that it is the father, mother, brother or sister of someone who passed away. As a municipality, we have lost Councillors and Officials to this pandemic. If you would let me, I want to read a verse from Psalm 27:1 that I pray will help to console you:

- *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; I will fear no one. The LORD protects me from all danger; I will never be afraid."*

The pandemic has badly affected the international, the national and our local economy. Before the pandemic, we already experienced problems, now they have become worse. Many people of this municipality, find things very difficult. There are some who are without hope, they may have given up or are about to do so.

For those who struggle, and are not yet on our indigent register but meet the requirements, please talk to our Ward Councillor for help and visit our Finance section at the entrance of the main door. You can get R414.00 worth of services for sewerage and refuse removal and free water and free electricity, of a certain value.

On the other hand, it will take hard work to get back to where we were before the pandemic, but things are slowly coming back to normal, and we must all be a bit more patient. If, I may borrow, *"No matter how long the night, the day is sure to come "*

From the side of the municipality, we will also do what is possible to alleviate poverty, and the financial burden that people experience. There are unfortunately departments, who on some votes in their budgets, didn't spend any of the money available. For now, as an example, we still have R1m in the budget for students at tertiary level, and we will try and distribute this to students who deserve it before the end of the financial year.

In the next council meeting, I will submit a report that will consider the possibility of an amnesty, for those who are guilty of illegal electricity connections. This will be done with the aim, to get people to connect legally so that the municipality receive revenue from the sale of electricity. Another report, will come to you maybe in August 2021, it will be to consider the arrears that residential households and businesses have, and what are the possibilities which exist in terms of a write off.

There is no doubt that the JB Marks Municipality, belong to the residents of Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp. We were given a certain simple task by them to perform. This was and still is to give them basic services, such as clean running water on a regular basis, electricity, sewerage and the, on time removal of refuse. It is their right in terms of the highest law to receive it.

In my position as the political head of the municipality, I want to be the first, to admit that many times, in this Council Chamber, we were not busy with the people's business. As the representatives of the people, we are divided and it has led to political instability. We must admit our debates could have taken place with a much better spirit.

As a municipality we became inward looking, was less compassionate, and stopped many good things that once took place from taking place. We took our eyes of the ball, so to speak, became defocused, and in the process made so many mistakes.

We, as governing and opposition parties, history will remember us, as the council who caused the Provincial Government to Intervene in the affairs of the municipality, and help or take over with the running of the same.

As I read this speech to you, the Administration is also in trouble. Last year in October, one senior and one junior official were arrested by the Hawks and are charged with serious crimes. The charges allege that the wrong doing was done against the municipality.

The Municipal Manager and the Chief Financial Officer, were suspended in February 2021, by the Administrator of the Municipality. Last month they were summoned by the same Administrator, to attend disciplinary hearings, in order to answer to some serious allegations levelled against them.

I am aware that as a Council, we have not as yet received any reports that relates to the two items, I have just spoken about. It is the right of this Council, to be kept informed of such important matters. I will ensure that this is corrected, and that the information is placed before you.

Although we have staff on all levels, who are still very much committed to do their work, I must also admit that there are many who suffer from a low morale. We are in the process of developing a plan to address this problem.

Many staff members on all levels of the salary grade, report for work late, or leave early and sadly though, others do not report for duty at all. There are those who are guilty of all three. It helps to account for why things are not being done, or not done on time. We pay a lot for overtime and still the work is not done. I asked the Acting Municipal Manager to urgently address this problem.

We are late to comply with what is expected from us. Last year the budget was adopted very late, and unfortunately this year, although it will be adopted earlier than last year, it is still late.

Within the next week or so, I plan to visit all the municipal departments, and will convey this urgent message to them, that they need to pull up their socks.

On behalf of this Council, the Executive that I lead, I want to apologise to the people for the things that went wrong, and is still going wrong. I want to say to you that you deserve better.

I have assembled teams of Councillors and Officials, men and women, who will help me to do your work, the people's work. I have asked them in everything that we do, we must put the people *first*.

### **Mayoral 100 Day Campaign**

Soon, I will launch the Mayoral 100 Day Campaign. This will be amongst others to address the poor state of our internal roads, the many potholes, grass cutting, the painting of road marks and lines, as well as the problem of illegal dumping.

As the Mayor, I cannot do this alone. To the Councillors, the Officials and the Community "*ka kopa thusa?*"

I know you need these services on a regular basis. The ANC, in its document, "*Through the Eye of the Needle*", says that as your leaders, we must listen to the people and respond to them. I was put here by the ANC to do the same, and therefore for now this is what we will do and going forward it will happen more and more.

### **Back to Normal**

Mr Acting Speaker, we must get our municipality, which went off track, back on track. This we will get right when we restore things within the municipality to normality. The Mayoral Committee Meetings will take place twice in a month to consider reports before they serve in council or at portfolio committee meetings.

The Portfolio Committees of Council, must meet and form quorums, so that they process the business of the people, without delay. It is wrong that portfolio committee members are paid, but they do not attend meetings of the same.

I am aware of the restrictions that COVID-19 places on mass gatherings but within the limits allowed, ward Councillors must hold public meetings and in this way consult and inform the people at the same time, about their own public affairs.

The Heads of Department's (HOD) meetings must sit twice in a month to consider reports and make recommendations to MAYCOM. When Councillors ask for a report the same must be given as soon as possible, to enable them to play their oversight role. When we don't receive reports, we will know that Administration is not hard at work.

We must set for ourselves the goal of restoring good management and good governance, so that the Provincial Intervention must come to an end. I plan to meet with the Administrator, so that we know where we are now in the process. Council has never received a report from the same, about the progress or lack thereof, which is being made. On this, I will report back to Council.

We have been with the current staff structure from 2017 and it has not really worked effectively for us. It is time for change. The departments must be the same as the number of MMC's that we have. We are going to free Sports, Arts and Culture, LED, Community Services, in order for each to be departments on their own.

Besides, we will take out all the political offices, from the Directorate Corporate Services, in order to respect the principle of separation of powers. There must be clear lines of difference to avoid interference from any side.

### **Municipal Reputation**

Our municipality does not have a good reputation at the moment for many reasons. Too many times, when it is in the newspaper, it is for the wrong reasons, and many times without our reply. From now on, when there is a negative story about us, we must reply to it and put our version there as well.

When there are complaints, with good cause shown, for example, about theft, corruption and fraud, about any officials and councillors, then it must be fully and fairly investigated, and the results be made known. Where consequence management is necessary, it must be effected without fear or favour. We must try and avoid the claim, that we are a municipality, who hide and protect the bad people, who work or serve this body.

We must stop the abuse of power, with political investigations. This is where we investigate to deal selectively, with people we consider our enemies, or for some or other reason we don't like them, or they are seen as not from "*our group*". I am told of one instance, where an official was suspended from active duty with pay for more than fourteen (14) months without being charged for any offence allegedly committed.

Where there is unfairness, it leads to a lack of peace and labour instability, in the workforce. Also, the municipality, is the one who loses money and the reputation is harmed, due to the warfare.

### **International Partnership with Sweden**

On Monday, June 7, 2021 together with Cllrs Makoe (Acting Speaker) and Brits, we attended the South-Africa -Swedish Monitoring Committee Meeting. The partnership, although movement between the two countries are affected by the pandemic, it is still alive and well. Travel between the two countries will resume next year (2022). I've requested, Mr Thomas Muswede, to submit the report for the attention of Council, at the meeting of August 2021.

### **Collection Rate**

In the budget document, Finance warns us that our revenue collection rate has declined to 85% from 95%. First, I want to express our appreciation to the loyal ratepayers of our municipality. In the second place, this drop in the number who pays is regrettable, but not beyond understanding. We have been irregular with the collection of refuse removal, and other service delivery challenges, so we must do better and win back the trust of the residents.

I wish to appeal to the residents, to say, "*ka kopa thusa?*" by paying for your services, every month in full. The more money we have the more we can do of the projects that are in the IDP and maintain our infrastructure.

### **Tariffs**

The increases in tariffs for the new financial year is unfortunately something we must do if we want to render services to the public.

We try to keep the rates as low as possible for water and sanitation by only asking for a 6% increase for each. The increase for waste removal

is kept at 4%. For electricity, it is 14.59%, I know it is a bit high, and we are so sorry for this.

## **Challenges**

Mr Acting Speaker, the budget outlines many challenges on SPC 1130 but I am happy to report that it also provide solutions for the same challenges. For example, it points out the infrastructure that is old and needs maintenance but at the same time money is made available for repairs and maintenance.

## **Vote of Thanks**

Cllr Makoe, I now come to the best and easiest part of the speech, which is to give praise where the same is deserved. The list includes:

- The former Executive Mayor, Cllr Khumalo for the leadership taken at the start of August 2020 when the budget process started.
- The Speaker and The Acting Speaker, for hosting us, with the Draft Budget and now with the adoption of the Final Budget and supplying the breakfast and lunch as well.
- The MMC for the Budget and Treasury Office, Cllr Johnson and his team of officials for putting the budget together.
- Thank you to the Chief Whip of the ANC for making certain that the ANC Councillors are always here to support the adoption of the budget.
- A big thank you to all the opposition parties, for the role you play, the contributions made, you make our local democracy work for our people.
- The Acting Municipal Manager, Mr Masibi and his office staff for ensuring that the budget indeed is prepared by the officials in Budget and Treasury. Also, to his officials who made sure the IDP is compiled and submitted for approval.
- A big thank you to our colleagues at the National and Provincial Treasuries who gave very good guidance on the compilation of this budget.

- The same big thank you to the Office of the Auditor General for the North West Province.
- A big thank you to my son, who always love and support me in whatever I do.
- Thank you to the members of the Mayoral Committee who are also members of the Budget Steering Committee.
- A big thank you to all the staff, former and current, in the Office of the Executive Mayor, who supported the same, during the budget process.
- A big thank you to the Directorate Corporate Services, the Secretariat in particular, for the minute and record keeping of all meetings of the Budget Steering Committee.

### **Adoption of the Budget**

Mr Acting Speaker, I present today a budget whose deficit has gone down and is smaller from the last budget we adopted. It is also a budget which is fully funded.

I therefore, submit to this house the following reports for their adoption:

- The financial budget for the 2021/2022 financial year
- The budget related policies
- The municipal IDP for 2021/2022
- The recommended tariffs for the 2021/2022 financial year

Yours in Good Governance

**Alderlady Mapule Mataboge**  
**EXECUTIVE MAYOR**