

MAHLAKU TARGETS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

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The municipality has registered 17 800 indigents who are entitled to 10 Kl of free water, 50 Kwh of electricity, sanitation and free waste removal services once a week

The executive mayor of Metsimaholo Local Municipality, Brutus Mahlaku, has revealed that a huge slice of the R830-million 2013/2014 budget will be spent on infrastructure development in key towns within the municipality.

Mahlaku said all stakeholders within the municipality will have to join hands to improve service delivery. "To positively turn the situation around, we cannot do it all by ourselves, we must also proactively engage our residents, ward committees, the business and other sectors in our communities to foster strong partnerships and alliances with all stakeholders to make Metsimaholo a better place to live, work and prosper in. It cannot be business as usual, if we are serious about realising our municipality's vision of becoming the economic powerbase and municipality of excellence."

He said the municipality forecasts an increase in revenue which will be used to improve service delivery. "Our revenue budget, which provides the required resources to enable us to deliver to our residents and communities, amounts to R832.9-million in 2013/2014 and increases over the medium term to R896.3-million in 2015/2016. The growth in the revenue budget for the 2013/2014 financial year compared to the adjusted budget for the current financial year amounts to R75.1-million or 9.9 percent."

"Electricity and water remain our major sources of own revenue at an average of 24.3 and 23.0 percent per annum respectively over the medium term, whilst property rates will contribute on average 11.7 percent to own sources of revenue over the next three years," added Mahlaku.

Mahlaku also revealed that grants from government had increased during the current financial year. "Government grants, comprising mainly of the equitable share, other operating grants and capital grants will amount to R201.6-million in 2013/2014 increasing marginally to R204.6-million in 2015/2016. These grants represent an average of 24 percent of our total budgeted revenue over the next three years, which means that the municipality is relying more on own sources of revenue to finance its day-to-day operations and programmes.

"Amongst other programmes, the equitable share allocation from the national treasury will ensure that we continue providing a basic social package to our indigents to guarantee poorer households at least a decent level of access to basic municipal services." The Metsimaholo Local Municipality provides free services to 17 800 indigents. Mahlaku said the municipality will continue providing free services to the poor but urged those who can afford to pay their rates and taxes.

"For the 2013/2014 financial year 17 800 registered indigents have been provided for in the budget. In terms of the municipality's indigent policy registered households are entitled to 10 kl free water, 50 kw hours of electricity, sanitation and free waste removal once a week as well as a 50 rand subsidy on property rates.

However, for the municipality to continue improving the quality of services provided to all our residents we need to generate the required own revenue. In these tough economic times strong revenue management will be absolutely fundamental to the financial sustainability of every municipality.

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“The reality is that we are faced with huge development backlogs and severe levels of poverty in our communities. The funding required to address these challenges will inevitably always exceed available resources; hence difficult choices have to be made in relation to tariff increases and balancing expenditures against realistically anticipated revenues,” he said.

According to Mahlaku, the municipality has set aside R100-million to complete various infrastructure projects during the current financial year. “A water ring feed main at Omnia has been installed with success at approximately R10-million at the heavy industrial area.

The first phase of the water demand management project completed with six sectional meters being installed to help investigate and address water loss. The first phase was done at a cost of R3.5-million. We are further building municipal offices at Zamdela worth R36-million and we trust and hope that this project will be completed by the end of this year.

“We are paving the main collector roads in Sisulu Section and the project is worth R35-million and will be completed by 30 July 2013. We are building a Sanitation and pump station at Amelia. The cost of the project is R37, 2-million and the project will be successfully completed by next month, 30 June 2013,” said Mahlaku.

The municipality has received additional funding from the Fezile Dabi District Municipality as well as provincial government departments to undertake additional infrastructure projects.

“Funds has been successfully secured for Metsimaholo Extension 6 for 368 stand: The bucket eradication project will overlap to next financial 2013/14 and will be completed by 30 November 2013. Funds has been successful secured for Gortin Sanitation phase 4 project ,which will be implemented in the next financial year 2013/2014.

“Fezile Dabi District Municipality has availed funds for Gortin sewer house connections and the project will be completed by 30 November 2013. We have in collaboration with Metsimaholo Rejuvenation established four new family parks in wards 10, 11, 12 and 21,” said Mahlaku

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