



**SPEECH DELIVERED BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR , ALDERMAN Z.I. DUMZELA  
DURING THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 MAY 2020**

---

Honourable Speaker

Mayors and speakers from the local Municipalities

Chief Whips

Political leadership from all organisations

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Traditional Leaders

Councillors

Municipal Managers, Directors and municipal officials

Members of the civil society

Distinguished Guests

Members of the community

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we gather here today on a different platform in the form of virtual council meeting, we look back on 63 days into lockdown due to the world pandemic caused by the coronavirus. What started out as a virus in far away China, escalated rapidly across all continents.

Life changed overnight and the world has to adapt to a “New Normal” as many changes will remain in place due to covid-19.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May the world celebrated International Nurses Day. As the largest health care profession in the world there is no doubt that nurses are key to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Nurses are educated to understand the complex nature of maintaining health and wellness and the impact of socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment and ethnicity. Of all health workers infected with Covid19, nurses are hardest hit in South Africa. In the USA it is reported that one third of all United State Covid19 deaths are nursing home residents

Mr Speaker, let me take the opportunity to salute all essential workers who have to leave their homes and their families to combat the spread of the virus on a daily basis. Many of them become victims of the virus, and many of them loose their lives in their duty to protect others.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of May , South Africa joined the world in observing World Telecommunications and Information Society Day. This day is aimed at raising awareness on the possibilities that the use of the internet and other information and communication technologies can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide. The value of technology during the covid-19 lockdown is beyond measure and strengthens my dream of rolling out free wi-fi to all towns in the District. Two years ago a wifi pilot project was launched by the District in Sterkspruit and the next phase is planned for Mt Fletcher in the new financial year with a budget of R200 000 .

On Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> of May we celebrated the founding of the Organisation of Africa Unity in 1963 and the precursor of the African Union of which President Ramaphosa is currently the chairperson. Africa day intends to celebrate and acknowledge the successes of the African Union in its fight against colonialism and apartheid and I quote :

***We are Africans – not because we were born here but because Africa was born in us.***- close quote. The president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah who had a vision for a united Africa.

“

Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, our economy – which was already declared junk status by the Big Three credit rating agencies - was hit very hard by the covid-19 .

Due to the total lockdown , Multi-national businesses down to the small street hawker in town had to close down initially for 21 days. This period was extended Mr Speaker, and today marks day 63 of the lockdown. Estimations indicate that between 1 to 3 million job losses occurred in the country due to the Covid-19 hard lockdown.

Mr Speaker, the lockdown, however, has served its purpose by allowing sufficient time for the health facilities and other important role players to prepare for the peak of the virus which is expected in the last quarter of this year.

On Sunday evening, President Ramaphosa in his address to the nation indicated that South Africa will be placed on alert level 3 as of 01 June 2020 to open up the economy.

## **WATER AND SANITATION**

Mr Speaker, the provision of water to households intensified with the pandemic as water must be available for handwashing and cleaning of surfaces.

Since the declaration of the coronavirus as a National Disaster, Joe Gqabi District Municipality received 265 jojo tanks from the Department of Water and Sanitation, the Alimdaad Foundation and the Eastern Cape

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)  
These tanks are installed at villages throughout the district through an Implementing Agent.

The **total revenue** of the 2020/21 budget amounts to **R577 m** and the **total expenditure is R521m**.

The total **capital expenditure** amounts to R303 m and includes the following projects :

The **upscale of the Barkly East Water Infrastructure** to ensure sufficient supply of water to the area of Barkly East, **including the planned construction of 298 new houses**, will continue in the next financial year with a further amount budgeted for R10m ;

The **Jamestown Sanitation** project will continue to Phase 3 which include the laying of sewer lines and is budgeted at R21m;

New projects for the 2020/21 financial year include the **Maclear Water Upgrade** with a budget of R10m , the **Ugie Sanitation Infrastructure Phase 1** Project with a budget of R15 m and construction of a **Waste Water Treatment Works Holding and settling dams in Aliwal North** with a budget of R15m ;

In addition to MIG funded projects, there are 2 projects to be implemented with loan funding from the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) in the form of **frontloading**. These projects are currently in the bid evaluation stage and include the **Maclear Water Treatment and Distribution Upgrade** with an approved budget of R96 m and the **Maclear Bulk Sanitation Infrastructure Upgrade** with an approved budget of R49 m.

The Elundini Rural Water Project (ORIO) with the objective of providing **water** to 107 villages in the rural areas of Elundini will continue in the new financial year with a budget of R15 m. The evaluation of Requests for Quotations was prolonged in the current financial year due to the submission of quotations involving more than two sub-consultants per package.

It is anticipated that the Evaluation and Adjudication processes will be concluded by the end of June 2020, and the Consultant will be able to conclude the designs by the end of August 2020. The procurement of contractors will start in mid-September 2020.

The area of Lady Grey was hit hard by water shortages over the past 5 years due to the prevailing drought. As part of the drought relief, the water treatment plant at Lady Grey was commissioned with the drilling of 13 new boreholes and 6 new reservoirs. The plans for the construction of the **Zachtevlei Dam in Lady Grey** has been approved and the first phase has been budgeted for in the 2020/21 financial year to the amount of R20m.

Mr Speaker, **No** projects will be stopped due to Covid-19 and funding forfeited in this current year will be re-allocated in the 2020/21 financial year to ensure the completion of the projects.

In accordance with the provision of MIG Covid 19 guidelines, a number of immediate, short term projects were identified including :

- Repairs to the Burgersdorp waste water treatment plant to an amount of R17.9m ,
- Refurbishment of the Burgersdorp Water Treatment Works – R8.7m
- Upgrade of the Oviston Water Treatment Works – R2.5m

- Aliwal North Joe Gqabi Informal Settlement Water Supply – R2.4m
- **Elundini Drought Relief** Project with a budget allocation of R8.5 for the provisioning of new boreholes and associated infrastructure and
- Water carting to the 265 jojo tanks in rural villages amounting to R2.4m.

## **JOGEDA**

Mr Speaker, the Joe Gqabi Economic Development Agency has a mandate to deliver on the economic outcomes envisioned in the District's Growth and Development Summit Agreements primarily through investment promotion in key priority areas that would stimulate trade and industry whilst providing opportunities for job creation within the district.

**RAFI** is a commercial initiative formed to enhance cooperative enterprises in the Eastern Cape in an attempt to assist agricultural cooperatives. In the District, the programme was piloted in Elundini Local Municipality in the current financial year and included Lower Tsitsana where 88 hectares were covered in soy bean crops and Hlankomo where 113 hectares covered with white maize crops. The plan is to extend the programme to cover about 30 000 hectares over a period of time. An amount of R2.5 m has been budgeted for the 2020/21 financial year.

The **District Livestock Improvement Programme** is meant to benefit previously disadvantaged farmers in the District who are situated in communal areas, commonages and farms. It is meant to improve the quality of their livestock by providing rams and bulls to improve the

genes of the livestock. Through this programme the District purchased 40 dohne merino rams which were allocated to Sterkspruit breeding schemes and 5 shearing sheds were constructed in Mt Fletcher.

Going forward, an amount of R300 000 will procure an additional 30 rams.

In addition, the District passed a resolution to extend the mandate of JoGEDA to include the assistance of the Water Services Provision section in the implementation of its water and sanitation programmes . As the implementing agent, JoGEDA will bring in the required resources to the **Senqu Rural Sanitation** with a budget of R42m and the **Senqu Rural Water Supply** with a budget of R22m .

## **DISTRICT PROGRAMMES**

As per the district Budget, funding is availed for programmes including amongst others the Aids Programme – R90 000, Women’s Programmes – R100 000, and R400 000 for livestock improvement projects.

R220 000 for are budgeted for Youth Programmes, R950 000 for SMME support and training and R1.5m is allocated for the Sondela Festival.

Mr Speaker, though the District has budgeted for its programmes, it is not clear how the Covid-19 regulations might affect programmes which requires social gatherings. It must be noted that some or all the relevant programmes’ budgets might be re-allocated to assist in funding the District Municipality’s responds to Covid-19 .

## **TARIFFS**

- Conventional meter tariffs increase by 7%
- Sanitation services increase with 8%
- All other services including pre-paid water increase with 6%

- Indigent households on pre-paid meters – no increase
- Indigent households with conventional meters – increase with 6%

Mr Speaker, uncertain times await the District in terms service delivery and growth and development. New circumstances call for new measures and by working together, we can I overcome these difficulties and ensure a better life for all.

Act responsible, wash your hands regularly with soap and water, wear a mask when you have to leave the house and keep your social distance.

God bless