



HWANGE

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

MONTHLY e-NEWSLETTER

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Tomutambula, Tulamutambula, Sizalamukela!

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) is proud to announce the introduction of its first edition of the monthly e-newsletter. The e-newsletter will contain issues concerning latest developments and activities being undertaken by the local authority towards its drive to offer better service delivery to all stakeholders. The e-newsletter will be distributed electronically via e-mail and Whats App to Council employees, councillors, district heads of all Government departments and media houses. It will be published on the first week of each month detailing developments of the previous month. Through introducing an e-newsletter, HLB joins a number of organisations advocating for a paperless and green environment. The introduction of the e-newsletter is also a commitment to embrace digital technologies, which are becoming indispensable in almost every aspect of human endeavour, especially on the advent of the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19). HLB seeks to utilise the publication to strengthen communication and effectively maintain its contact with all its stakeholders, in particular the residents. The e-newsletter is an assurance that HLB desires to be an open, transparent and engaging local authority.

‘Hwange is Big’

HWANGE Local Board chairman Councillor Nqobile Mabhena says the synonymous reference of Hwange as a coal-mining area is negatively stifling its economic growth.

Clr Mabhena said as the local authority gears towards attaining municipality status there was need to aggressively market Hwange as a diversified economic hub anchored on tourism so as to continuously attract investors.

“We no longer want Hwange to be associated with coal mining. To many people, Hwange is synonymous with coal. In essence Hwange is actually a tourism town and we endeavour it to be identified with other industrial processes, as well as being associated with many economic variables besides coal-mining,” he said.

Clr Mabhena said Hwange was one of the largest contributors to the country’s Gross Domestic Product yet its economic growth has remained stunted.

“Referring to Hwange as small is an anomaly,

it’s actually big. We have been witnessing large numbers of investors flocking for years...,” he said.

Clr Mabhena further reiterated that revenue generated through harnessing district’s resources was not being channelled towards growing its economy.

“If only we can have deals or investments whereby money made in Hwange is also spent in Hwange, I think this will assist us in our growth trajectory,” he said.

Clr Mabhena said it was heart rendering to note that some firms involved in coal mining had contributed to the destruction of most roads in the district but fail to rehabilitate them.

“Our road infrastructure is suffering, it’s taking a beating from coal mining companies’ haulage trucks...we are also not seeing an Social Corporate Responsibility, as it is we are struggling to complete a Covid-19 isolation centre but we have many players involved in coal mining activities,” he said.



Councillor Nqobile Mabhena



Clay poaching activities continue to persist mainly due to the ever-increasing housing projects being carried out in Hwange urban

STOP IT! Council moves to stop soil poaching

EFFORTS to rehabilitate vast swathes of land, that have been degraded due to clay soil poaching activities has started in earnest.

Hwange Local Board public relations officer Mr Dumisani Nsingo said the local authority was leaving no stone unturned in its quest to get rid of the rampant illegal soil extraction activities.

“We have now reached a point where we are saying this issue must go...people are allowed to make money and fend for their families but it has to be done in a regulated way,” he said.

Mr Nsingo said the local authority has since approached various stakeholders seeking assistance to rehabilitate the affected areas.

“I have started engaging our stakeholders, to donate equipment (to rehabilitate affected areas) to us, while we are at it, EMA (Environmental Management Authority) is already wielding the proverbial axe on us,” he said.

Mr Nsingo noted that the local authority was financial constrained to carry out the rehabilitation exercise without assistance from other stakeholders.

“Our coffers are dry. We don’t have the resources that are required to rehabilitating those particular areas. The reasons we are going to stakeholders with a begging bowl is that we don’t have money and we are being

ordered (by EMA) to clear that area by the 25th of September,” he said.

The illicit activity is currently taking place in the bushy areas of Empumalanga and Don Bosco. This has been on-going for over a decade and is being perpetrated by some unscrupulous individuals involved in brick moulding.

Mr Nsingo acknowledged that land degradation in the concerned areas had reached alarming levels and continues to accelerate.

“When you see a huge number of truckloads moving out with bricks, it indicates that the sizes of the pits dug there are in tandem with the trucks going out. As the trucks move out, it means pits have been left there and soil has been removed. It’s really alarming, some of the pits are the size of a house,” he said.

Mr Nsingo further said that: “It’s in these areas where we have offered land as residential stand. Others (soil poachers) have even dug pits close to houses, to an extent that some properties risk falling in”.

He however, warned to local authority officials and councillors to guard against being involved in this illegal soil abstraction activity as they risk being prosecuted.

“We have a huge issue before us and it will be unfair for anyone of us to be part of the cause of that problem...the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act, that’s the one that tells us which activities should be carried out



where. So we are implementing the legislation which is at our disposal and if we don’t do that as Council we will be found wanting,” said Mr Nsingo.

He said over the past few years the local authority has made efforts to regularise activities of the brick moulders.

“We have made concerted efforts to assist people to earn a living and those that were moulding bricks for a genuine course were assisted to get land from the Hwange Rural District Council,” said Mr Nsingo.

The local authority also organised a workshop where the Standard Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) certified bricks that are produced by some of the brick moulders.

Town Secretary up for top gong

Town secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose has for the third year running been nominated for an accolade at the annual National Megafest Business Awards.

Pastor Mdlalose was nominated for the 2020 National Megafest Business Awards in the Public Sector Leader of the year category.

The awards were scheduled to be held in March but were postponed due to outbreak of the coronavirus (Covid-19).

According to the event organisers, the awards are set to be held once the respiratory disease is contained, failure of which they would be hosted on a virtual platform.

In a statement the steering and selection committee of the Megafest Business Awards hailed Pastor Mdlalose for raising the Matabeleland region's bar high through his outstanding business acumen and high ethical conduct.

"You have been selected because you demonstrate business excellence and the highest standards of ethical conduct, integrity and civic and social responsibility," it said.

Pastor Mdlalose was nominated after a rigorous selection process to identify the country's best public sector executive.

"The selection committee deliberated long hours and gave careful consideration to all nominees. You and the other recipients stood out as leaders who exemplify ethical standards and behaviours," read part the statement.

In 2018 he was the first runner-up for the town clerk of the year in the Local Government awards category only to scoop the top gong last year.

In 2017 HLB was the winner of the Water Supply and Waste Water Management at an awards ceremony which was held during the Local Government Investment Logic Conference in Harare.

HLB in bid to tackle Covid-19

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) has intensified efforts to curb the spread of novel coronavirus (Covid-19) in its area of jurisdiction as well as the district as a whole.

HLB town secretary, Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose is leading the fight against the spread of the respiratory disease from the front.

Pastor Mdlalose, who is also chairman of the Hwange District Covid-19 taskforce committee said work on the refurbishment of Five Miles Hospital into an isolation centre was nearing completion.

"We are currently looking at refurbishing part of the Five Miles Hospital and turning it into an isolation centre and work is at an advanced stage of completion," said Pastor Mdlalose.

Pastor Mdlalose added that the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution Richard Moyo was likely to tour the facility soon before it is officially handed over Ministry of Health and Child Care.

Minister Moyo last toured the facility in May when Chinese engineering company, Sino Hydro donated \$1,5 million and 15 000 face masks towards the fight against Covid-19 in the district.

Sino Hydro is a Chinese owned engineering company doing contract work in Hwange, one of them being the Hwange power station Unit 7 and 8 expansion project in partnership with the Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC).

"We have been receiving quite a significant number of support and donations although it's less than what we expected," said Pastor Mdlalose.

He said efforts are being made to upgrade other health institutions to admit Covid-19 patients.

"As a taskforce we are willing to set-up more structures to enable more health institutions to receive Covid-19 patients, if the necessary support is availed," said Pastor Mdlalose.

He added that the local authority had also

put in place various initiatives and guidelines to protect its employees from contracting the viral disease.

"At our workplaces we have made it a point to provide each of our employees with the necessary Personal Protective Equipment and made sure that people visiting our premises go through under the requisite guideline, which include hand sanitisation as well as temperature checks," said Pastor Mdlalose.

Hwange Local Board environmental health technician Mr Nqobile Ndelaphi Mabhena said the local authority was making efforts to enforce Government's Covid-19 regulations and guidelines.

"We have made it mandatory for shops to have hand washing facilities and sanitizers at the point of entry. This is enforced during licensing and routine health inspections by the Environmental Health Section.

"We are also ensuring the displaying of information as well as educational and communication material at public places, which include clinics, shopping centres and council offices," he said.

The local authority has also established a Rapid Response team for contact tracing and specimen collection for Covid-19. It also facilitates community health education programme on Covid-19 and has been involved in disinfecting public places and rooms for isolated patients.

Mr Mabhena however, said the local authority's only health facility, Empumalanga Clinic was presently ill-equipped to deal with Covid-19 cases.

"Council's health facility is not well prepared for Covid-19 cases as there is no designated isolation room within the facility," he said.

The local authority with the assistance of various local stakeholders has however, been in the forefront in efforts to rehabilitate the district hospital into an isolation centre.

The Ministry of Health and Child Care has also facilitated a number of training workshops to impart the district's health workers with requisite information in the fight against Covid-19.

"Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work in hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus." – Alexander Graham Bell

Water reticulation project takes shape

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) has started commissioning water reticulation at Empumalanga Phase 4 housing project as part of efforts to effectively monitor and avail portable water to residents through legal channels.

HLB town secretary, Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose said a considerable number of households have been connected to the local authority's water reticulation system.

"We have already commissioned water in Phase 4. As it is some parts (of the area) are now able to access water," he said.

To date HLB has laid 2 536 metres of pipe network out of a total stretch of 6 374 metres while 191 households and residential stands out of a total of 508 already have access to water.

The project is part of the local authority's initiative aimed at curbing illegal water connections being perpetrated by some property owners in the area.

It is also aimed at ensuring the property owners are billed for actual water usage.

Pastor Mdlalose said the local authority was forced to resort to manual labour for its water reticulation project due to depressed financial resources.

"Our coffers weren't sufficient for us to hire equipment thus we took advantage of depressed wages then and we made the project labour intensive...," he said.

Pastor Mdlalose added that the water reticulation project would be linked to other housing projects beyond Phase 4.

"The project is also meant to avail water to those with stands beyond Phase 4 such as the FBC Bank housing project. The idea is to do water reticulation up to where residential stands start and put a bulk meter thereafter connect beneficiaries for reticulation purposes," he said.

Pastor Mdlalose noted that the local authority was expediting the water reticulation project so as to enable the resumption of other proposed housing projects.

"It's imperative that we push (the project) quickly, so that there is a connection point because stand beneficiaries can't build when there is no water. The plan is to do a line that connects to FBC Bank stands and others



Digging trenches for laying of water pipes

beyond," he added.

The town secretary played a pivotal role in ensuring the servicing of the area after beneficiaries of stands started developing before the land could be serviced.

He also expedited the release of US\$600 000 by Government through the Public Sector Investment Programme for road construction.

"The Phase 4 reticulation programme is a long standing legacy issue dating back to 2009, which we had to go all out to rectify," said Pastor Mdlalose.

HLB town engineer Phillip Nguni expressed satisfaction at the progress being undertaken to install the water reticulation system at Phase 4.

"We are still very far (from completing the project) this is largely due to the approach we are undertaking, which is laborious. However, there has been a significant achievement despite the fact that we are working on difficult terrains," he said.

The local authority currently relies on manual labour to excavate rocky areas for the laying of pipes.

"It's very difficult to dislodge rocks manually.

We were even forced to temporarily abandon works on one pipeline route as we failed remove a rock outcrop. Efforts to hire a jackhammer have been futile due to the costs involved," said Eng Nguni.

The project, which was meant to commence at the beginning of the year was delayed due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak.

"We lost a lot of time at the beginning of the year. The initial lockdown in March affected our rhythm as the workforce only came back in May. I'm however, hoping that by the end of the year 80 percent of the properties would have been reticulated," said Eng Nguni.

He stated that the water reticulation project was also a test to prove the local authority's ability to manage water distribution.

"Through this project HLB will demonstrate its ability to manage water distribution for its residents. The concerned residents will be expected to pay their bills to Council and in case of major break downs, we will be able to speedily address the problems...," said Eng Nguni.

Council dresses its police

THE Hwange Local Board (HLB) recently bought new uniforms for its security guards as part of efforts to ensure its workforce is dressed in a representable manner while conducting their duties.

HLB security officer Elvis Mageza said the new uniforms have provided the local authority's security personnel with the necessary confidence to carry themselves in a strong, authoritative manner while executing their mandate.

"As a department we are very much excited about this latest development.

The mood within the department has moved a notch up and that on its own tends to motivate and improve confidence among the workforce," he said.

Mageza said it was of paramount importance for security guards to be immaculately dressed to enhance the local authority's image.

"The new uniforms have enhanced our appearance to the public. As security, we are the organisation's first port of call and portray the image of the organisation before a client proceeds to other departments," he said.

Mageza also noted that the local authority's uniform policy was the same across gender.

He however, added that the department was still in need of more security attire.

"We still need another set for summer to enable our guards to change their uniforms within the nick of time while also ensuring that the uniform doesn't get worn out within a short period. We are also in need of shoes and hats as well as apparatus such as baton sticks and hand cuffs that goes with security," he said.

HLB currently has 26 security guards manning strategic premises in Chibondo, Empumalanga and Baobab as well as ensuring residents abide by the local authority's by laws.

The local authority is looking forward to employing more security details as part of its efforts to enhance its policing mandate.



A security officer in the new uniform

Council move headquarters

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) will soon relocate to its new head office as it moves to provide spacious working stations for its staff as part of its growth strategy.

HLB town secretary, Pastor Mdlalose said the moving of the head office from a Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC) leased building to a Council owned property was a major milestone in the local authority's history.

The local authority has since its inception in 46 years ago been headquartered at a leased ZPC building at number 12 Sandalwood Crescent Baobab Hill.

However, work to convert its Early Childhood pre-school building situated along Baobab Drive into offices is at an advanced stage.

The new offices are housing the town secretary and the chairman as well as other administrative staff.

Council is also constructing a state-of-the-art boardroom next to the new offices.

The boardroom would accommodate 30 people with the same number occupying the auditorium.

It will also comprise of four offices with the town secretary and the chairman expected to be occupying two of the offices.

"We are definitely moving to those new offices as a way to show people the direction we are

taking. To point out the seriousness of that (boardroom construction) project, I have said if pressed for time and resources all other less critical projects should stop as I intend to have that project completed this year," said Pastor Mdlalose.

Construction of the boardroom started in June.

Pastor Mdlalose said the local authority was on a drive to improve its fixed assets base.

"One of the reasons we pushing for that (boardroom construction project) is because we want the balance sheet of the Council to improve. Council must have fixed assets, so this is one of the projects we are pushing in trying to improve the balance sheet," he said.

Pastor Mdlalose further noted that plans are also underway to construct houses for all its managerial team.

"The other project, which is following soon, is the construction of managers' houses. We have been renting offices and renting for managers yet we are owners of the land..." he said.

As part of its medium term plan, the local authority is working on constructing its head office building at the proposed Civic Centre site.

"The new offices are temporary, as we will soon be having our headquarters at our proposed Civic Centre. However, this heralds a major breakthrough since the inception of this



Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose

local authority, it's the first time that a Council chair has an office," said Pastor Mdlalose.

HLB housing and community services director Mr Ananias Banda reiterated Pastor Mdlalose's sentiments further stating that the old offices would be turned into a housing office.

"We intend to turn the old head office into a housing office to serve Baobab and Chibondo residents while residents in Empumalanga have long been making use of the Empumalanga housing office," he said.

CORONAVIRUS SAFETY

Follow these easy steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Disinfect surfaces around your home and work.



Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.



Sneeze or cough? Cover your mouth.