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Pastor Mdlalose's war cry

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) town secretary Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose has made a clarion call to his management team to scale-up their performance to enable the local authority to improve on its service delivery.

Taking a leaf out of the book of Samuel in the Holy Bible Pastor Mdlalose said there was a need for the local authority's executive and section heads to make concerted efforts towards ensuring that he achieves targets spelled out on his performance contract.

He said this while addressing the local authority's management and section heads.

"I long for you to give me what I desire for the people...apply bravery, dedication and commitment and when you achieve that for me, it won't be for me but for the people that you and I serve. My passion is to deliver service," said Pastor Mdlalose.

He further hinted that management should have a sense of ownership on every project being carried out by the local authority.

"Every Council project is our project, all of us. We have a duty to ensure that every project being undertaken by Council succeeds I'm measured (by the Government) on things that

I have achieved," said Pastor Mdlalose.

The town secretary's performance contract guides the programmes and management priorities of the Council for the budget year.

Pastor Mdlalose said going forward management was expected to work round-the-clock to ensure improved delivery services.

"We are now changing the way we have been doing things. I now expect managers to be available 24/7 to attend to residents issues, whether at night or day, holiday or weekday," he said.

In a bid to expedite completion of projects as well as to improve service delivery, Pastor Mdlalose tasked management and section heads to come up with quarterly plans for their respective divisions.

"We have plans that we have structured as a Council and these will be achieved through these quarterly plans. These plans also serve to show us where there would be bottlenecks and we work together to unlock those bottlenecks," said Pastor Mdlalose.

The plans are set to be reviewed at the end of each quarter to ascertain how each section would have performed against its set targets.

"We want to take that further because I



Pastor Ndumiso Mdlalose

need to monitor and walk with you on the achievements. I expect respective departments and sections to come up with Gantt charts for their quarterly plans while I will have a dashboard to check or track what will be taking place," said Pastor Mdlalose.

A Gantt chart is a useful graphical tool which shows activities or tasks performed against time. It is also known as visual presentation of a project where the activities are broken down and displayed on a chart which makes it is easy to understand and interpret.

HLB projects considered in Provincial Development Plan

HWANGE Local Board (HLB)'s capital projects have been considered in Matabeleland North's list of highly prioritised development plans whose impact is expected to turnaround the economy of the province.

HLB's Empumalanga West housing project and construction of Hwange Teachers' College have been included on list of high impact projects enshrined in the draft Provincial Development Plan.

In her presentation to all the district local authorities Matabeleland North Provincial Development Coordinator Mrs Sithandiwe Ncube said there was a need for each local authority in the province to come up with other priority project, which were not included on the Provincial Development Plan's high impact projects.

"Let (local authorities)'s look at what we might have omitted (that was meant to be included in our list of priority projects). However, we shouldn't say because some of the projects have been included in the (Provincial Development) Plan, we then abandon them. There are projects of routine nature in our areas of jurisdiction. We expect you to carry them out," she said.

Mrs Ncube also said there was a need for the province to produce an attractive investment opportunities brochure to enable it to lure potential investors to invest in its area.

"The investment opportunities brochure we are going to take to Embassies in search of investors should be properly packaged to attract investors.

"There's funding, which is already there and there's funding which we have to look for. Bear in mind that individual local authorities can also market themselves to potential investors," she said.

Responding to Mrs Ncube HLB chairman Councillor Nqobile Ocean Mabhena pointed out that a number of infrastructural developments earmarked to be carried out within the local authority's area of jurisdiction had not been included in the list of high impact projects.

"Our interest is not only on the construction of houses per se. We want expansion on other corresponding infrastructure. We expect the town to grow in tandem with the expansion project at Hwange Power Station thus we also need to focus on upgrading our sewer plant and having one or two additional water reservoirs," he said.

He further said the local authority was also looking forward to constructing a Civic Centre

at its proposed Central Business District (CBD).

"As a local authority we also want to construct our own Civic Centre and in partnership with ZPC (Zimbabwe Power Company) there's a likelihood of setting up a state-of-the-art hospital. Initially it was supposed to be a clinic, but ZPC has indicated that it wants a stand for the construction of a hospital," said Cllr Mabhena said.

The establishment of the Civic Centre was

mooted about seven years ago but the local authority was struggling to attract investors to take up the project, only for Old Mutual to commit itself two years ago.

The servicing of 2145 Empumalanga West residential stands has since been handed over to Government.

The Empumalanga West project was initiated by Council in 2014 as a way of providing a low cost housing scheme for low income earners.

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Soonga Road, Hwange

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Sizimisele community garden excites HLB



Town Secretary Pastor Mdlalose (left) and Chairman Councillor Nqobile Ocean Mabhena listen to Sizimisele community garden beneficiaries

THE success story of Sizimisele community garden in Empumalanga suburb has given Hwange Local Board (HLB) the impetus to expedite the rolling out of the concept to other areas in an effort to assist vulnerable members of the community.

HLB chairman Councillor Nqobile Ocean Mabhena said the local authority remains committed to spreading the community garden concept in all wards in its area of jurisdiction.

“There’s already a resolution for the setting up of community gardens in all wards in need of one. We are expecting Ward Development Committees (Wadcos) with the assistance of their Councillors to identify a piece of land that will be recommended by Council’s engineering department to embark on such a project,” he said.

Ward six Wadco members have already expressed an interest in putting up a community garden.

Cllr Mabhena emphasised on the need to ensure that beneficiaries of the schemes are drawn from the less fortunate members of

society.

“There should be a criteria for one to qualify as a beneficiary of the project. It’s not just everyone, it’s meant for vulnerable members of the community such as widows among others,” he said.

Cllr Mabhena hailed Sizimisele community garden members for their sheer dedication and commitment in their quest to ensure the productiveness of the agricultural enterprise.

“This year, this group of women (Sizimisele community garden members) managed to realise a very beautiful maize crop,” he said.

Sizimisele community garden’s membership comprises of 14 women from ward five with varying vulnerability challenges. The project was initiated by ward Councillor Tendai Sibanda four years ago.

Cllr Mabhena said despite the project’s success there was a need to ensure its sustainability and viability.

“The scheme doesn’t have a source of water and proper fence to secure their produce. We are therefore appealing to donors or individuals to assist in drilling a borehole and putting up a fence, so that they farm right

throughout the year,” he said.

Cllr Mabhena said the agricultural project’s goal of turning around livelihoods of its beneficiaries could only be achieved if production was done throughout the year.

“We want to see them (Sizimisele community garden members) having a nutrition garden, so that they can grow vegetables throughout the year for their families or sell to supplement their other forms of income,” he said.

Cllr Sibanda reiterated Cllr Mabhena’s sentiments saying access to a reliable water source would enable the community garden members to embark on thriving horticultural project.

“If only we had access to water we will be planting horticultural crops such as carrots, tomatoes, spinach, chomolia among others. These will enable members to fend for themselves.

“As you are aware all of our members are disadvantaged. For instance we have a widow who takes care of three grandchildren. All her four children passed on and she survives on hand-outs,” she said.

“Just one small positive thought in the morning can change your whole day.”
 – Dalai Lama

HLB fire and rescue team up for the task

HWANGE Local Board (HLB)'s fire and rescue section successfully carried out a six-day training course aimed at imparting Sino Hydro workers with requisite skills to avert accidents at their work stations.

According to HLB team leader fire fighter Mr Shonipai Muleya, the course was aimed at equipping Sino Hydro's construction employees with essential rescue and lifesaving skills in the event of accidents while at work.

"We trained them on rescue skills at high rise construction buildings. Generally, we were equipping them on how to rescue themselves when there are accidents and to be aware of certain hazards that might befall them at their workplaces," he said.

The training comes after one of the company's Chinese national fell about 30 metres to the ground at Hwange Power Station's construction site.

The expatriate later died upon admission at Hwange Colliery hospital.

Sino Hydro is carrying out Hwange Power Station's expansion project, which will see 600 megawatts added to the national grid.

Apart from attending to various accident and emergency scenes in Hwange District, HLB's fire and rescue section has also carried out awareness campaigns.

"We occasionally do awareness campaigns throughout Hwange as well as carry out fire inspection of premises for companies. We don't only look at rescue services but fire prevention as well," said Mr Muleya.

HLB chairman Councillor Nqobile Ocean Mabhena said the local authority's fire and rescue team was highly skilled as its members have been receiving specialised training from a reputable organisation from the United Kingdom (UK) since 2015.

However, last year the training, which is held annually in Bulawayo did not take place due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak.

"The training that our team offered Sino Hydro (employees) is basically more of the same training we send them to take part in Bulawayo every year, through a partnership we have with a foreign organisation called Operation Florian.

"The organisation is based in the UK and



Part of Hwange Local Board fire and rescue team

has been coming to impart knowledge to our emergency and response team. We expect them to spread that knowledge through training other organisations such as Sino Hydro," said Cllr Mabhena.

Operation Florian is a charity organisation that assists fire, rescue and ambulance services throughout the world.

Cllr Mabhena called on other companies especially mines in Hwange to undergo the training course so as to ensure the safety of their workforce and operations.

"We hope other organisations such as mines can come forward and undertake this training. It's unfortunate we don't have adequate equipment to offer fully-fledged training but if any of the companies in need of train can provide, that would be a plus," said Cllr Mabhena.

HLB's fire and rescue section is also part of Hwange District's Civil Protection Unit (CPU).

"Our team are highly skilled and are also members of the CPU and are also trained to

carry out rescue services during floods," said Cllr Mabhena.

He also acknowledged that the fire and rescue team offered free training to non-profit making organisations

"The trainings also assist Council in terms of revenue generation because they aren't offered for free. Organisations have to pay but for institutions like schools, churches and other charitable organisations, it's for free and this entails fire awareness programmes," said Cllr Mabhena.

Operation Florian has offered to donate a fire engine to the local authority.

About US\$15 000 is needed to ship the fire engine and supporting ancillary equipment into the country.

"We are in the process of raising funds and also in talks with Government to have the equipment coming through our borders free of duty. We are quite aware that other Councils have been doing the same and exempted from paying duty," said Cllr Mabhena

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'Council should tap expertise from communities'

Wisakile Mwanjali

HWANGE Local Board (HLB) chairman Councillor Nqobile Ocean Mabhena says there is a need for community members to extend their helping hand to the local authority to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate of service delivery.

Cllr Mabhena's remarks came after the Nkoma brothers, Chidano and Lazarus repaired and painted lockers at Empumalanga clinic.

The Nkoma brothers are panel beaters residing in Empumalanga suburb.

"We are quite aware that there are numerous people who possess practical skills within our communities. These are more than welcome to render any form of service to Council out of goodwill, since they will be realising the challenges we are facing. By so doing they will also be playing a big role towards our growth as a local authority," said Cllr Mabhena.

He said Council could only grow and improve on service delivery through effective and constructive support from members of community.

"As Council we sometimes encounter challenges with regards to issues to do with governance, accounting and financial management, yet we have experts in communities.

"We have various professionals in communities and these are the people we need to come forward during our budget consultation meetings, so that they will open up our minds and eyes," said Cllr Mabhena.

He further said councillors should make use of the presence of technocrats in their wards to develop their areas.

"When councillors call for ward meetings we expect them to invite technocrats and practically skilled people from their areas so as to chart the way forward.

"Practical skilled people derive their business from the community and can always work from the bottom of their hearts to serve their communities..." said Cllr Mabhena.

Empumalanga sister-in-charge Sindiso Mhlanga said the refurbishment of lockers



Nkoma brothers at their workplace



An old locker before and after repair by Nkoma brothers

would go a long way towards ensuring proper upkeep of the health institution's stationery.

The Nkoma brothers said the repairing of clinic lockers was part of their corporate social responsibility.

"We decided to repair the lockers out of

sheer benevolence as we are quite aware that the clinic serves the community where we live and operate from. In future we are looking forward to Council also giving us jobs in our line of business as part of their efforts to grow local businesses," said Lazarus.



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7 | Striving for Excellence

All smiles from Cheer fund beneficiaries

Wisakile Mwanjali

BENEFICIARIES of the Mayor's Christmas cheer fund have hailed Hwange Local Board (HLB) for affording them a smile in the wake of the coronavirus (Covid-19) scourge.

The Mayor's Christmas cheer fund beneficiaries interviewed by this publication applauded the local authority for coming up with the charity driven initiative.

The sole purpose of the Mayor's Christmas cheer fund is for individuals and corporates to extend a helping hand to the less fortunate members of the community during the festive season.

HLB spearheads the initiative by way of fundraising and seeking donations for the cause through the chairman's office.

One of the beneficiaries, Mr Bekithemba Sibanda (42) said last year's Mayor's Christmas cheer fund just like the previous one came at a time when most homes were struggling from the effects of Covid-19 outbreak.

"The goodies we received had a huge impact to most beneficiaries' livelihoods because it came at a time when we were desperately in need of assistance.

"Most homes had literally run dry of foodstuffs and other household necessities due to the effects of Covid-19, which affected most people's ways of making ends meet," he said.

Mr Sibanda is physically challenged and moves with the aid of a wheelchair. He is married to Emmah and the two have two children, Blessing (11) and Blessed (8). Mr Sibanda's wife is unemployed while he ekes a living through repairing shoes.

"We are also appealing to well-wishers to assist us in whatever possible way they could," said Mr Sibanda.

Another beneficiary, Ms Egelina Tshuma also applauded HLB for initiating the Mayor's Christmas cheer fund.

Ms Tshuma is a single parent whose daughter was forced to drop out of school in 2019 while she was in Grade 7 due to her down syndrome condition.



Bekithemba Sibanda

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.