

Mayoral Speech Council Meeting 27 October 2022

Good morning Speaker, Aldermen, Deputy Mayor, Chief Whip, Councillors, Municipal Manager, Directors, Officials, Members of the Media and the Public

ELECTRO-TECHNICAL:

In reviewing the first quarter of the 2022/23 financial year, I will comment first on the Electricity crisis and the loadshedding that we are experiencing.

The CEO of Eskom, Mr Andre de Ruyter, in an address at a recent Energy Summit in Cape Town, likened Eskom to a car that has been driven in the red revs constantly – the equivalent of pushing equipment beyond its optimal performance levels. This means that serious refurbishment is required and that many of our power stations are reaching the end of the useful lives. He indicated that R1.2 trillion will need to be invested to replace existing capacity by 2035. While this opens up massive opportunities for the private sector to invest in renewables and new capacity, there are enormous challenges to deal with over the next 2-3 years.

The various stages of loadshedding are hurting our economy, our businesses and households. Our officials are meeting with the major electricity users to establish their needs. We have successfully managed to get the George Regional Hospital off loadshedding. Numerous other large employers desperately need assistance.

Some other pertinent points:

- a) Our 1MW solar PV plant has received environmental approval and the tender process is underway;
- b) In the forthcoming adjustments budget we will probably need to make strategic decisions to seek rapid solutions in the form of alternative power generation to see if we can advance a target date to provide relief off Stage 1 by hopefully the July-September 2023 quarter;
- c) We have made applications for grant funding for renewable projects, which if successful will be to great benefit of George;
- d) We spend R120 000 on diesel to power our generators on every day that we have loadshedding at Stage 4 and above;

- e) While our shifts in adjusting tariffs have been complex, they are crucial tools that will assist us all to become more aware of the importance of energy and its usage. Many consumers are shifting to renewables which will impact on the marginal revenue that is so crucial to deliver services. If we seriously wish to decrease the effect of loadshedding on our lives, each one of us needs to help by shifting the capacity load on the power that Eskom has to provide us during the morning and evening peaks;
- f) We are concerned about the number of house and business fires that are occurring around loadshedding periods. I am therefore requesting that all councillors make our citizens aware of the need to switch off electrical appliances before loadshedding commences and to only switch back on after power has been fully restored;
- g) The Municipality has budgeted R5.6 million of own funds for the electrification of our informal settlements this year. This is almost four times the amount for last year, and the year before the budget was R800 000. To date we have spent over R1m of the 2022/2023 allocation. In Zone 6 in Thembalethu, we completed the electrification of 99 homes.
- h) Streetlights were installed in Ndyawa Street at an amount of R 176k and Thembalethu Area 8C UISP was also completed at an amount of R 1,06m.
- i) There were further upgrades in 32nd and 35th Street at an amount of R 515k, the Africa substation was upgraded to an amount of R 331k and the construction of Thembalethu 66/11kV substation has started with almost R13 million being spent to date.
- j) I also want to congratulate, Mr Bongani Mandla on becoming a finalist in the Rising Stars Awards in the Services: Public and Private Category.

ROADS

- a. Tabata St-phase 1 has been completed and phase 2 has commenced and is due for completion in early 2023. This will improve the main arterial through wards 12, 13 and 15. The value of these upgrades amounts to R43.5m.
- b. We are awaiting MIG approval to upgrade Ngcakani street, valued at R18m.
- c. The Dellville Park Road upgrading at a cost of R10m starts in February 2023
- d. In November we will be starting the repairs and upgrading of several streets and pavements in Haarlem and Uniondale
- e. We are also upgrading the storm water canal in Cathcart Street in Uniondale.

CIVILS

- a) We have recently completed stormwater upgrades In Borchards, Lawaaikamp and Conville at a value of R15.1m.
- b) We are currently planning or implementing water and sanitation projects to the value of R168.3m in Themba lethu
- c) Water meters and chambers to the value of R4m have been rolled out in Themba lethu and Lawaaikamp
- d) Bulk infrastructure for the greater George area includes a new 20MI WTW, a new 10MI WWTW at the Outeniqua Works and upgrading of our sewer pump stations, including Meul and Eden.
- e) R137m will be spent on water provision in Pacaltsdorp, commencing early 2023.
- f) In Uniondale and Haarlem we are upgrading our WTWs with new buildings and laboratories at a cost of R2.7m, as well as new pipelines in Uniondale.
- g) The value of this work being rolled out by CES amounts to R405 500 000

SOCIAL, SPORT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- a. I am sure everyone saw the wonderful article in last week's George Herald on the excellent work being undertaken by our Social Development section. Some of the work includes the distribution of food parcels to HIV positive patients, a clothing bank for addressing the needs of the vulnerable, we contribute R3.4 m annually to 126 soup kitchens to feed almost 53 000 vulnerable and hungry residents.
- b. We also support over 500 food gardens in the community. It is most gratifying to know that the following areas are participating: Rosedale 104; New dawn park 54; Themba lethu 90; Touwsranten 92; Haarlem 42; Conville 56; Lawaaikamp 18; Blanco 30; Waboonskraal 20.
- c. A Youth summit, as well as a summit for the youth on Economic Development was held in the past few months.
- d. Of course, as we know, none of these are the mandate of the municipality – but we do what we must as we care deeply.

- e. Turning to sport, the upgrade of the Rosemoor tartan track is going to commence soon, as you will have seen in our agenda of today, and the Netball courts in Rosemoor and Pacaltsdorp are being upgraded in anticipation of the World Cup next year.
- b) The upgrades to the Conville swimming pool has resulted in some of the biggest sporting events, as competitors flocked to George. We receive many compliments from visitors who see how clean and orderly we keep this facility.
- c) A small sports hall is being built in Themba lethu costing R2.4m
- d) The ward projects to the value of R1.4m are due to be rolled out soon.
- e) I also want to thank the efforts of MMC Adams in driving Vlakkie Cricket across George and in this way providing our citizens with opportunities for recreation and the spirit of friendly competition.
- f) We have been privileged to host the host the Funda Mzantsi library and reading outreach where Dep Mayor Figland played an important role.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- a. The municipality bought equipment and containers for the various Neighbourhood Watches.
- b. CCTV cameras are being increased in Pacaltsdorp, Eden Park and Blanco. The rollout of fibre will result in cameras in Rosemore and Borchards. Themba lethu, the Nelson Mandela Boulevard, the CBD and Parkdene are fully covered.
- c. Our one-of-a-kind Traffic Drive-through in Blanco for MVR is preparing to welcome clients.
- d. We have also opened a new licence centre in Uniondale.
- e. The upgrade of the Themba lethu fire station is being undertaken at a cost of over R400k.
- f. R1.6m has been dedicated to the upgrade of Themba lethu sports facilities

WASTE, PARKS AND RECREATION

- a) Throughout George we have had to needlessly spend funds spent on addressing illegal dumping. I would like to call on all our councillors to engage with their ward committees and civil society organisations to encourage efforts to discourage illegal dumping, vandalism and cable

theft. These scourges are costing the Municipality millions every month, money that could be spent to the benefit of communities.

- b) R18m has been budgeted for a composting facility in terms of a grant recently received.
- c) Beautification of areas continues in conjunction with local communities, including the beautification of three sites in Thembaletu which were previously sites for illegal dumping.
- d) The Thembaletu cemetery fence was replaced at a cost of R1.35m.
- e) This year R2.3m has been allocated to various upgrades at Gwaiing River and recreational facilities in Pacaltsdorp.

FINANCES AND SUPPLY CHAIN

- a) This year our indigents will continue to receive 70 free elec units while other munis and National only give 50 free units. (This is a 40% difference).
- b) Finance is also busy with a 2nd indigent drive to ensure we reach our vulnerable residents
- c) R 207m was spent on the appointment of local, emerging businesses in George in the last financial year. The SMMEs include engineers, building contractors, legal advisors, landscapers and electrical engineers.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- a. NDPG node in Thembaletu: consultants are on site this week and will be meeting with the ward cllrs and ward committees this week to commence the consultation process.
- b. The Pacaltsdorp SMME node: consultants appointed, and stakeholder engagements will start mid-November
- c. Planning for Gwaiing development node has commenced
- d. Planning for Ossie Urban Industrial development has commenced
- e. Redesign and final technical planning for Dellville Park and Sweetpea Residential Developments underway
- f. The Feasibility Report for the Croc Farm Social Housing project of 400 housing units has been finalised and is to be tabled to Council
- g. Commenced basic scoping for Groeneweide site
- h. We have placed a number of sites in Eden Park (erf 325) out to tender for business, social and religious use.

- i. Hosted various engagements with the Informal Traders and their representative body (SAITA).
- j. Reviewing the Informal Trading bylaw.
- k. Guidelines to be tabled to Mayco in November for the implementation of Mobile Businesses (eg food trucks)
- l. Hosted various skills development and training opportunities: How to Pitch, Business Skills, Business Etiquette, How to submit tenders
- m. Funding proposal for a three-year incubator for SMME's (special focus on women and youth)
- n. Roll out of various entrepreneurship programs, such as the innovative new businesses that have been created around mobility through the allocation of almost 100 bicycles. Explore our Hood is a local company who have started a culinary bicycle tour in Thembaletu.
- o. Emerging Developer and Contractor Training
- p. Our tourism section is working with the Heritage committee in Pacaltsdorp to record the wonderful stories of the community.
- q. There are "Dine with a Local" hosts in both communities.
- r. We have also trained a number of cultural site guides who are active Thembaletu and Pacaltsdorp. We are assisting to further increase their skills by giving nature site guide training

2. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

- a. Erf 325: A total of 791 of the 1091 houses constructed have been handed over to qualifying beneficiaries. The remainder of 614 houses are being prepared for handover. A total of 94 houses were handed over in the past 6 months and 13 FLISP units.
- b. Metro: 200 FLISP units, 93 BNG double story units, 130 BNG single story units and 13 units for persons with disabilities will be constructed. The contractor Ruwaccon was appointed, and construction has commenced. The first feedback meeting with the beneficiaries was held successfully on 11 October 2022
- c. The Thembaletu UISP Project was approved for the construction of 4350 serviced sites in Thembaletu. To date a total of 1746 serviced sites have been handed over to beneficiaries. Some of these have been awarded a consolidation subsidy which allowed the property owner to build a home. Phase 3 to 5 of the UISP is approved for 2145 serviced sites and planning is underway
- d. Retaining walls for various sites in Themba are being constructed.

- e. 145 water-borne toilets are being installed in Uniondale and Thembaletu

IN CLOSING

It is important for us as Council to regularly reflect on our roles as councillors in providing the policy direction for the Administration. We need to record our appreciation to our Administration who have willingly taken up the huge task of improving and fixing George. This takes enormous dedication. It is our Administration that has achieved the monumental list of activities that I have just mentioned. We should not under-estimate the work capacity and performance of this team and the sacrifices they make. Our municipal manager and directors often quite correctly feel overwhelmed with what they deal with daily, at night, over weekends. On behalf of Council, I want to take this opportunity to thank each one of you senior staff and your teams for the work that you do to make George the sought after intermediate city that we are fast becoming.

Thank you so much.

Leon van Wyk

27 October 2022