KNYSNA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL APPROVES 2013/2014 BUDGET

The Knysna Municipality approved the 2013/2014 budget during the Council Meeting of 30 May 2013.

In her annual State of the Town Address, which preceded the tabling of the budget, Mayor Georlene Wolmarans said the budget continued to fight the difficult economic situation the town found itself in.

“Considering the unlikelihood of the economic position changing much in the next three to four budget cycles, at least, the budget follows a conservative approach to rates and tariffs but also slowly begins to plan in anticipation of improved economic conditions from 2017/18,” said Wolmarans.

The new budget, also referred to as the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTREF), amounts to some R608-million of which R76-million is allocated for capital expenditure and R532-million for operating expenditure. This is an increase of 8.4% from the 2012/13 approved budget (R561-million) and 6.1% from the 2012/13 adjusted budget.

The main budget implications for ratepayers will be:

• Prepaid electricity meters will be introduced to all properties in Knysna over the next three years.
• Arrears will in future be loaded onto the prepaid electricity system.
• Areas in which residents have not paid for services in the past will be levied a Municipal Service Accessibility Charge (MSAC) of R30 a month via the prepaid electricity system from January 2014. The MSAC will be waived if the resident is formally registered on the Knysna Municipality Indigent Register.
• Increase average of 6% tariff for electricity.
• Water tariff increase of 6%.
• Increase of 8% on all sewerage tariffs.
• Refuse tariff increase of 6% for domestic and business consumers.
• Minor tariffs will be increased by 7.5% on average unless otherwise indicated in the tariff book.

COUNCIL NEWS JUNE 2013

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NEW ROADS PAMPHLET

Have you ever wondered what’s up with our roads? The Knysna Municipality has just launched a pamphlet explaining all the issues surrounding the condition of the roads in its municipal area.

The pamphlet describes the realities surrounding budget allocations, how roads are prioritised for maintenance and repair, as well as the rules regarding fixing your own pothole. Yes, you have read correctly, under certain circumstances you may fix your own!

The pamphlet is available at all municipality service centres. It can also be downloaded from www.knysna.gov.za in the Media section (Brochures and Pamphlets) of the Information Centre.

Few wards see as much activity as Ward 10, as large parts thereof is dedicated to Knysna’s business and industrial areas. Up for the challenge is Councillor Richard Dawson who is not only an experienced councillor, but had been part of the corporate world for a very long time before going into politics.

“I am passionate about Knysna and committed to assist where possible in these difficult times to restore the town’s business community, and to hopefully attract investment and thereby improve the dignity and quality of life to all residents through jobs, improved infrastructure, sound management and prudent expenditure.”

Like all other wards in the Knysna Municipal Area, Ward 10 received R200 000 towards capital projects in the 2012/13 financial year. The projects covered in this ward allocation funding included:

- STREET LIGHTS
  - Council will also be planting well-established, indigenous trees in the CBD where old trees had been removed for various reasons.
  - One of the main issues in Ward 10 relates to the condition of roads. The roads in the ward arguably take the most traffic in Knysna, which includes many heavy vehicles.
  - The quantity and weight of vehicles are contributing factors to the damage of roads, which is frustrating to all concerned but unavoidable. The municipality attends to roads according to a priority list and in accordance with budget availability.
  - Fortunately, many of the roads in Ward 10 are in fact on that priority list because of the amount of traffic it takes. In addition to the repairs schedule, some of the ward-based allocation funds for Ward 10 have gone towards fixing more potholes in the CBD, but maintaining roads is very expensive and funding very limited,” said Mr. Dawson.

- REST ROOM FOR CLEANERS
  - A rest room for street cleaners who had until recently stored their belongings in an unlit and un-electrified corner of a building. The cleaners also had no dedicated place to sit or eat. Their new hut, situated in a corner at the main taxi rank, provides lockers for the workers as well as seating and a small kitchen area.
  - Toilet facilities at the taxi rank, which had been damaged and were unhygienic, are currently being repaired and upgraded.

- TAXI RANK TOILETS
  - A need for additional street lighting in Gray Street, from the Main Street corner down, was identified as priority to improve safety and security at night for visitors to the town centre. A few extra lights have already been installed and more is planned when the 2013/14 ward allocation funds become available.

The Knysna Municipality welcomes its new Director Technical Services, Mr. Michael Rhode, who took up his new position on 3 June 2013.

Knyansa Municipal Manager Lauren Waring said Mr. Rhode’s extensive experience as engineer in local government, combined with strong leadership skills, were exactly what the municipality required in its Technical Services Directorate. “This department is core to very important infrastructure service delivery such as water, sewerage and roads. These are areas where strong leadership and high technical ability are essential. We look forward to the difference Mr. Rhode can make in this department.”

Originally from Cape Town, Michael J Rhodes has an Electrical Engineering Degree from the University of Stellenbosch. He is also a Certified Energy Manager, Certified Measurements and Verification Professional and holds a Government Certificate of Competency. He has served as Director: Logistics for the City of Cape Town, Director: Electrical Services in George and Director: Technical Services in Stellenbosch. Before he joined the Knysna Municipality, he headed the Electrical Services unit at Drakenstein Municipality.

Mr. Rhode is the Immediate Past President of the Association of Municipal Electrical Utilities (AMEU), a board member of the Power Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa (PIESA) and founder member of the South African Smart Grid Initiative (SASGI). He is also the current President Elect of the Southern Africa Revenue Protection Association (SARPA) and is due to be inaugurated as President at its annual conference in July 2013.

Mr. Rhode said he enjoyed serving the communities of South Africa and providing services in an efficient and effective manner. “I believe that best practices should be employed and I intend applying my skills and knowledge towards turning Knysna into a world class town that will be an example for other municipalities to follow.

“Together with the rest of the management team, I am determined to provide affordable quality services, alleviate poverty, and facilitate social and economic development in the Greater Knysna Municipal Area through integrated development planning, skills development and the sustainable use of resources” said Mr. Rhode.

Mr. Rhode is married to Michelle and has three children – two at university and one in Primary School.

FEATURING WARD 10: COUNCILLOR RICHARD DAWSON

NEW DIRECTOR TECHNICAL SERVICES
SUPPORTING PROMISING SAILORS

The Knysna Municipality has donated just under R10 000 towards the travelling costs of two local development sailors who have been selected to represent South Africa at the RS Tera Sailing World Championships in Weymouth in the United Kingdom in July.

Wanga Mbabe, aged 17, and Bhekumuzi Hani, aged 16, who are learners at Percy Mdala and Concordia High Schools respectively, were commended for their hard work and dedication at a Council meeting on 30 May 2013.

Handing over a check of R9 995-00, Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans said the boys had been working very hard to not only perform in their sailing but also to raise the necessary funds. “For them to be able to go and compete overseas, they have to raise R100 000 to cover all their expenses. The Knysna Municipal Council today adds a financial contribution to this cause and wishes you success in your future endeavours in sailing and in life. We know that you will be excellent representatives of Knysna and that, when you return, you will share your newly acquired life experience to the benefit of all you come in contact with,” said Wolmarans.

The boys will be accompanied by their coach Mike Pogodin of Knysna Yacht Club.

PERSONS WANTING TO DONATE TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT SAILORS’ TRIP CAN CONTACT THE KNYNSA YACHT CLUB OR ANDREW FINN AT +27 (0)82 5564 604.

THANK YOU BARGAIN BOOKS AND BOOK BUYERS

The Knysna Library has received several brand new books and audio books, which customers of Bargain Books bought at reduced prices to supplement the town’s stock. Especially welcome was the collection of children’s books. “Our libraries have become increasingly important to our local school children who use the facilities as a place to do their homework and school projects. Every book has the potential of helping hundreds of school children towards a better future. The municipality thanks Bargain Books for offering books at reduced prices as well as every person who bought a book for our libraries,” said Municipal Manager Lauren Waring.

Pictured here is Knysna Head Librarian Deanna van Heerden with some of the books received in this effort.

NEW VENTURE CREATION PROGRAMME

Twenty potential entrepreneurs have recently started attending a new Venture Creation Programme that will assist them in starting their own businesses. The year-long learnership is locally coordinated by African Development Group and funded by the Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority (CATHSETA).

The Economic Development unit of the Knysna Municipality has assisted in identifying 20 unemployed youths from Sedgefield, Karatara and Rheenendal to take part in the programme, which will train them in business skills and assist them with drawing up business plans and applying for funding. The municipality also provides some of the training venues.