Monthly info on what we do to remain inclusive, innovative, inspired.

FROM THE MAYOR'S PEN

Dear residents,

I thank each of you who took the time to add valuable input into the 2019/2020 budget, tabled during our 30 May Council Meeting. It is a well-known fact that public participation is the bedrock on which democracy rests, and your continued participation has not only ensured better decision-making with this budget, but also strengthened politicians’ accountability to the people.

Our very own Oyster Festival, organised for the people by the people, kicked off on 21 June. I am extremely proud to see how Greater Knysna stepped up to the challenge to continue with the tradition of this renowned festival. Although the festival no longer enjoys a major naming sponsor, Greater Knysna has showed its mettle and put a fantastic sport and lifestyle festival programme together—one that hosts a number of unique events, offering national and international sports lovers, families and adventurers a chance to experience Greater Knysna’s spectacular natural scenery, cuisine and hospitality.

As we welcome visitors to our town, I want to remind residents of the positive impact Settlements, Mr Mkunqwana has been made to refrain from damaging our town’s reputation by blocking the N2, as has been done in the past. As I’ve said before, I will not stand by idly and allow a minority to be used for their own selfish gain, even if it means blocking the road for the benefit of others.

THE 2019/2020 BUDGET AND YOUR WALLET

During the Council Meeting of 30 May, Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse tabled the 2019/2020 budget of approximately R1,182 billion, comprising of R275 million in capital expenditure and R955 million for operating expenditure.

Focus of the 2019/20 Final Budget

This 2019/2020 budget focuses on the upgrading and renewal of existing infrastructure and creating new infrastructure. This is important for the promotion of sustainable growth and reduction of poverty within Greater Knysna.

Cost focus is on economic infrastructure and includes:
- electricity transmission;
- waste water treatment works;
- road building and maintenance; and
- water storage upgrades and network pipe replacement.

For the economy of Greater Knysna to thrive, it is important to make infrastructure investment a vital ingredient in this budget.

CAPITAL BUDGET

The 2019/2020 capital budget of R275 million flows from the IDP revision process and contains information obtained from relevant stakeholders through ward committee and public participation processes.

The final budget takes into account the input given by Greater Knysna communities during public meetings held in all 11 wards.

The approximated funds in the capital budget will be utilised as follows:
- R4 million allocated for roads infrastructure, mainly Grey Street;
- R4 million, allocated for water management devices;
- R17 million, allocated for the continuation of the Charlesford scheme;
- R9 million, allocated for the upgrades at the Knysna Waste Water Treatment Works.

OPERATING BUDGET

This 2019/2020 Operating Budget of R 964 910 000, increased by R 50.9 million, or 5.6%, when compared to the 2018/2019 budget.

The cost drivers for the increase in the budget can be summarized as follows:
- an increase of 73% in the wage bill, based on the new agreement that comes into effect on 1 July 2019;
- an increase of 55.3% in the purchase of electricity from Eskom;
- transporting waste to Mossel Bay;
- adhering to the Department of Waters Affairs’ standards for operating water purification and waste water treatment plants;
- inflationary pressure and the general increase in the price of goods and services;
- current and expected increases in fuel prices and other production costs;
- Operational requirements to ensure service delivery standards are complied with, referring specifically to electricity, roads, water, wastewater and waste removal.

TARIFF INCREASES

To balance service delivery with affordability, proposed tariff increases have been limited as follows:
- property rates: between 2.5% and 3.5%, household dependent;
- water services: 5.5%;
- sewage rates: 4%;
- electricity services: 13.1%; and
- Refuse removal: 7.5%.

INDIGENT SUBSIDIES

The budget made provision for indigent support, however it must be noted that subsidies will be withdrawn from any person who:
- alters illegal electricity connections to their premises; and/or
- sub-leases their premises, meaning that the applicant is not personally occupying the premises, but is benefiting from the subsidy.

Indigent subsidy allows for the following monthly:
- 50kw of free electricity;
- 6kl of free water (3kl for free water for all other households);
- 100% subsidy on sanitation;
- 100% subsidy on refuse removal; and
- rates as per the rates policy depending on the value of the property.

REBATES ON SERVICE CHARGES

Copies of the final budget documents are available from the Municipal Offices in Clyde Street, or on www.knysna.gov.za

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NOTEWORTHY DAYS & EVENTS

21 – 30 June: Knysna Oyster Festival
6 July: Green Carpet Event | Hornlee Nite Spot
18 July: Nelson Mandela Day