Dear residents

I thank each of you who took the time to add valuable input into 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 that tourism has on our economy. I beseech the few disgruntled residents 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 create anarchy. I am tolerant of your divergent views, but ask that you do not abuse the political freedom we as South Africans enjoy. Anyone breaking the law will be harshly dealt with. So let us show the world that, as South Africans, we can sit round the table and find solutions. In the words of our beloved Madiba: “No problem is so deep that it cannot be overcome, given the will of all parties, through discussion and negotiation, rather than force and violence.”

Speaking of our Madiba, July offers the perfect time to get into the spirit of Madiba, especially during Mandela Day which falls on Thursday, 18 July. No matter how small your action, Mandela Day is about changing the world for the better, just as our own Tata Mandela did every day.

Mandela saw himself first and foremost as a servant of South Africa’s people, to whom he felt he owed a duty, and who he led by example. Mandela has passed on the torch of public service to everyone. “It is in your hands to make our world a better one for all,” he said.

Positive change was the gift left to all of us by Madiba, but it can only become a living legacy if we take up his challenge. So, in celebration of his life and legacy, please contribute 67 minutes of your time to help those in need on his birthday. Indeed, why not do things for those less fortunate throughout the year?

So as we continue to strive for the betterment of Greater Knysna and all who live within its beauty, allow me to leave you with a quote from the world’s greatest icon, Nelson Mandela: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made in the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

Be kind and tolerant to one another, ’til next month ...

MARK WILLEMSE, EXECUTIVE MAYOR
During the Council Meeting of 30 May, Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse tabled the 2019/2020 budget of approximately R1,182.5 billion, comprising of R217.5 million in capital expenditure and R965 million for operating expenses.

**Focus of the 2019/20 Final Budget**

This 2019/20 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. Council 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 R217.5 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:

- R14 million allocated for roads infrastructure, mainly Grey Street,
- R14 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 7.1% in the wage bill, based on the new agreement that comes into effect on 1 July 2019;
- an increase of 15.3% 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;
- recent 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%;
- sewerage charges: 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:

- allows 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 of free water for all other households);
- 100% subsidy on sanitation;
LEVEL 1 WATER RESTRICTIONS NOW APPLY, ALLOWING:

- for the watering of gardens for one hour 3 days a week;
- for the use of hosepipes for gardening and other purposes, and the use of irrigation systems from 18h00 to 19h00 during December to May (summer) and 17h00 to 18h00 during June to November (winter) as follows:
  - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays – residents with even street numbers;
  - Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays – residents with odd street numbers; and
- that residents still obtain permission from the Director: Technical Services before filling swimming pools and undertaking maintenance.

Report water leaks and water abuse to 044 302 6331 (o/h) or 060 998 7000.
Smme incubator successfully growing small business, boosting the economy and creating jobs.

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