



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 31 March 2016

EMBARGO: Immediate

Draft budget tabled for public input

KNYSNA – THE 2016/2017 DRAFT Annual Budget for Knysna Municipality was tabled this week by Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans and is available to the local community for comment and input.

During the Special Meeting of the Municipal Council on Thursday 31 March Mayor Wolmarans said: “It is my privilege to table the draft annual budget for the 2016/2017 financial year.

“With the welfare of all residents of our beautiful town at heart, our aim with this budget is to face challenges head-on. We will continue to do so until our term comes to an end.

“We urge residents to participate in this process and through the simple act of paying their rates ensure the financial well-being of the area.”

Residents can obtain copies of the draft budget from the municipal offices, libraries and Knysna Municipality’s website. The closing date for written representations from the public is set for Tuesday 3 May at 16:30. At the culmination of the process, the Mayor must consider all representations and decide if the budget should be amended.

It should be noted that the proposed tariff hikes for the municipality remain below double digits. The proposed increases are as follows: rates at 8,9%; refuse services at 9,5%, water services at 9,5%, sewerage at 8,9% and electricity at 7,6%.

After conclusion of the Council meeting, Mayor Wolmarans said in reference to the tabled document: “The downturn in the national economy means development has virtually ceased and unless this position can be reversed quickly, Knysna will have serious difficulties. Council has thus taken the decision to fast-track economic development at all levels.

“Only three options are available to Knysna: to aggressively grow our status as a preferred international tourist hub; to actively seek investment in environmentally friendly manufacturing initiatives to create more jobs; and to attract more service companies with the aim of job creation.”

“This budget rests on the idea of an inclusive social contract, encompassing an even-handed and fair burden of rates and taxes to fund our progressive programme of expenditures.

“The challenge is always to focus on the necessities and eliminate the ‘nice-to-have’ elements. This challenge is compounded not only by the disparity between the affluent communities of Knysna and our historically disadvantaged residents, but also due to Eskom’s tariff increases and our urgent need to address infrastructure requirements – specifically in regards to our water supply. Through a balanced budget, we aim to close these gaps and ensure a better life for all residents of Knysna.”

ENDS

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