

**THE STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF WEST  
RAND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY CLLR HULLET HILD –07 MARCH 2022**

Honourable Speaker

Executive Mayors present

Speakers

Chief Whips

Members of the Mayoral Committees

MPAC Chairperson Cllr Tumi Molusi

Aldermen's

Councilors

Religious Leaders

Business Community

Community Members

Officials

Media Crew

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon, Goeie Middag, Dumelang

## **SPEAKER**

It gives me pleasure to stand before this auspicious house to deliver my very first state of the district address as the Executive Mayor of the West Rand District Municipality.

Speaker, 52 days from today, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 we will be celebrating yet another year as a democratic country.

we must continue to remind ourselves that the principles of our democracy pivots around a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa for all her children and especially the West Rand Communities.

Speaker, please allow me to request that everyone present here today, rise to honour our healthcare workers of our region, district, province, our country, our continent, and the world at large for the significant role in preserving they played and still do in preserving and saving lives during the global pandemic.

Speaker also allow me to acknowledge and remember those whom we have lost due to Covid, Family members, friends, fellow Cllrs and employees of all institutions.

Candle Light Ceremony

Let us observe a moment of silence please.

We present this State of the District acknowledging that we assumed office on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022, a few months post the 2021 Local Government Elections. We must also acknowledge our coalition partners and all parties who voted me into office, and I promise not to fail you and assure you that your decision won't be regretted later.

Speaker we pride ourselves in Getting Things Done!

## **FINANCES:**

### **Robust financial management**

Mr. Speaker, I cannot shy from the truth that the district faced severe financial difficulties over the past years, be that due to unfunded mandates or VBS investments the impact of COVID 19 has exasperated matters. As a result, this has had a profoundly negative impact on service delivery. However, with the robust implementation of the financial recovery plan and the financial turnaround strategy (*approved in conjunction with the annual budget*), I can gladly confirm that the district is gradually improving its financial situation. The financial turnaround strategy of the district's main focus was based on cost curtailment, significant reduction of the trade creditors' balances and an application of a cost benefit analysis on each contracted services.

Mr. Speaker, the immediate benefits have been achieved as a result of implementing the financial turnaround strategy, however there are still medium- and long-term strategies that needs to be achieved with the hope that they will place the district in a better financial position. What remains for the district is the ability to generate its own revenue and source a funding model for firefighting services which constitutes more than 45% of the total annual budget.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate to report that since the declaration of the national disaster by the President of South Africa on 15 March 2020 to date, the COVID 19 epidemic had a major impact on regional revenue collection due to increase in unemployment and some businesses which had to cease operating due to lockdown restrictions.

Based on these challenges and demands accompanying the epidemic, all the municipalities in the West Rand region were placed under a difficult position whereby it was difficult to pay Eskom, Rand Water and majority of other critical service providers.

This Councilors, requires to be noted that The financial position of our local municipalities is currently at risk and presents negative liquidity ratios (*where current liabilities outweighs current assets*) and this means that the locals will have to work together with the district in expanding their financial turnaround strategies, cost containment plans and revenue enhancement strategies which are aimed to improve revenue collection to better manage working capital and ultimately to improve their financial health.

Presently, all local municipalities have secured payment arrangements with Eskom, Rand Water and other top ten creditors to ensure compliance with Municipal Finance Management Act (*by paying its creditors within 30 days*). Local municipalities also have water and electricity operational plans in place. The turnaround strategy has been reviewed on quarterly basis to manage distribution losses.

Mr Speaker in terms of distribution losses, way too much money are being spent on water leaks and illegal electricity connections.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the district achieved an unqualified audit opinion for 2020/2021 financial year and managed to reduce the number of audit findings from 28 to 20 over the past three financial years. Currently I am pleased to confirm that the District has no findings under supply chain management due to the effective systems and controls that are put in place to reduce the unauthorized, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure. This is a clear demonstration by the district to strive for the attainment of clean governance. The procurement of all items was done in accordance with Supply chain management policy and regulations. The district took into consideration all MFMA Circular Guides issued by the National Treasury since the outbreak of the pandemic in procuring COVID 19 items. The office of Auditor General South Africa has also been provided with information on the awards of service providers for all items of expenditure, and none of the awards were reported as irregular under the audit of 2020/2021 financial year. Mr. Speaker, this demonstrates that the resources of the municipality are used efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate to report that out of our three local municipalities, only Mogale City managed to achieve an unqualified audit opinion for 2020/2021 financial year. Rand West City and Merafong needs to put stringent efforts to improve their audit opinions and the clear actions to address findings raised by Auditor General must be put in place. The district working together with Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs are expected to play an important role in monitoring the effectiveness and implementation of local municipalities' audit action plans. The district therefore is expected to review annual financial statements of its local municipalities prior to their submission to the Office of Auditor General South Africa.

### **Annual Budget**

The annual budget has been submitted to both National and Provincial Treasury together with the funding budget plan (*as known as the financial turnaround strategy*) on how to improve the financial situation of the district. The implementation of this credible annual budget managed to reduce financial pressures faced by the district significant and continues to show positive impact on the implementation of the service delivery and budget implementation plan.

### **ON GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT**

#### **Finances audit and risk and governance**

Fellow Councillors, we continued to maintain good Governance structures in the form of our Section 80 Committees, Audit Committee, Performance Audit Committee, Risk Management Committee, Mayoral Committees, MPAC and Council.

On Audit Reports, honourable Councillors, please note that the municipality continues to attain Unqualified Audit Reports from the Auditor General.

These positive outcomes are due to the concerted efforts of the Internal Audit, external (independent) Audit Committee and all the departments within the Municipality. The Enterprise Risk Management unit of WRDM has been active and effective in identifying and mitigating risks.

On Enterprise Risk Management, The Accounting Officer has committed West Rand District Municipality (WRDM) to a process of risk management that is aligned to the principles of good governance, as supported by the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), Act no 56 of 2003.

The underlying intention of the enterprise risk management is that Institutions should through the risk management process achieve, among other things, the following outcomes needed to underpin and enhance performance:

- a) more efficient, reliable and cost effective delivery of services;
- b) more reliable decisions;
- c) innovation;
- d) minimised waste and fraud;
- e) prevention of fraud and corruption;
- f) better value for money through more efficient use of resources; and
- g) Better outputs and outcomes through improved programme and project management.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

Speaker we have a variety of programmes and activities on service delivery, and these are functions and responsibilities to strengthen local government integrity in rendering Service Delivery to our communities. The collaboration between District and the Local Municipalities cuts across Service Delivery related issues focusing on bettering the lives of the citizens of the West Rand in its entirety.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT REDUCTION**

Honorable Speaker, as per the pronouncement made by the Premier of Gauteng in his State of the Province Address, Gauteng's main focus is to tackle unemployment through reconstruction and economic recovery.

Honourable Councillors, as a result of the pandemic, our regional economy has been on a downward spiral resulting in businesses closing down and more people losing jobs. We are somehow inspired by the opportunities that lie ahead of us. It will therefore require our joint effort, resilience and innovative ways in order to revive our economy and regain the losses we have incurred due to the pandemic.

Honourable members we must however be brutally honest with ourselves, we must do more and quickly. Industrial areas must be looked at as a matter of priority. We must fix the roads leading to and within industrial areas, ensure that all road markings are in place, regularly cut the long grass and ensure visible public safety measures are in place. We must strive to immediately open blocked drains and fix water leaks in all our industrial areas. Believe me colleagues once we start to treat our industrial areas with the respect they deserve, only then will investors come to our region to open factories and create much needed jobs.

Our approach honorable speaker is to strengthen our partnership with the private sector who continue to play an important role in job creation whilst we as government have to create a conducive environment for businesses to thrive.

The West Rand District Municipality, as a strategic partner and contributor to the industrial hub of Gauteng Province has adopted a strategic posture of participating in the transformation modernization and re-industrialisation agenda of the province.

As outlined by the Premier of Gauteng there will be Special Economic Zones (SEZ) established in each of the five regions.

Land parcels have been made available for the different economic clusters, the development of the single multi-tier Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is the primary anchor of the industrialisation agenda. Where it should be priority to have at least one SEZ in each district or metro, specializing in distinct sectors and industries in each corridor.

### **The West Rand Mega Park**

Honourable Speaker planning to establish a unique industrial, International Agri City and Fresh Produce Market known as West Rand Mega Park in the West Rand are at an advanced stage. The Agri-City will include industrial and manufacturing to complement the development in order to enable value chain creation with local SMMEs.

The West Rand Mega park project is earmarked to be implemented along the N12 near Lenasia on the side of the West Rand. It will be a major catalytic project and enabler of future growth in the Rand West region. The Food Hub will include:

- Fresh Produce market,
- Meat Market,
- Egg & Dairy market,
- Seafood market,
- Flower market and
- Liquor market.

Furthermore, the development will include:

- Cold Storage facilities,
- The Square - public square with a number of restaurants,
- Agri Processing and
- A 40 000 sqm Wholesale Mall.

The development will provide world-class Agri Processing and industrial facilities.

The Fresh Produce Market will give access to produce markets for farmers, and it will unlock opportunities for emerging and small-scale farmers as well. The project will be part of the Special Economic Zone for the region and the Site Establishment is in the process of being finalized.

### **Krugersdorp Game Reserve Project**

The Krugersdorp Game reserve is owned by Mogale City Local Municipality and has been made available to the WRDM through the then WRDA to facilitate investment and the development of the game reserve. We are working very closely with Mogale City and Gauteng Infrastructure Financing Agency (GIFA) to revive the game reserve.

The Game Reserve includes a 100-hectare enclosed lion sanctuary, which attracts considerable interests with minimal marketing exposure.

GIFA has appointed a service provider to conduct a feasibility study which will help the Institution to determine whether the proposed project is financially, legally and technically feasible for the Institution.

The feasibility study is completed, and the final document will be presented to council in due course.

### **West Rand Academy**

The West Rand Academy is located at Westonaria Borwa, within the Rand West Municipality area. West Rand District Municipality (WRDM) has been identified for re-industrialization in line with the Gauteng provincial government's Transformation, Modernization and Re-industrialization (TMR) strategy. In order to realize this, the community of the WRDM needs to be trained in relevant skills to support the economic sectors that will emerge from the implementation of this strategy, which is driven by the WRDM.

The WRDM, Sibanye-Stillwater, and South Deep Mine together with other stakeholders have identified that an academy or college is required in Westonaria since there are no institutions of higher learning to provide skills that will support the vision of the region to be developing the agriculture sector and reducing reliance on mining.

To support the municipality's development plan (IDP) construction of the West Rand Academy has been initiated in a phased approach. There will be different schools or faculties with the school of Agriculture and Engineering forming part of the first phase. The project cost is an estimated amount of R 60 million for the total project and Phase 1 an estimated amount of R25 million. Sibanye Stillwater has donated the land for the Academy. The total area is 14 Ha of which 5 Ha will be used for Phase 1. The consulting Engineers has already been appointed and the construction should commence soon.

### **Egg Packing Facility**

Honourable Speaker, the WRDM has been approached by a group of potential investors who wants to lease one of our facilities to open an Egg packing Station in the Westonaria Industrial area. We are processing their application. The station will create over 59 direct jobs and many more indirect jobs when fully operational. It will also assist the egg producing farmers within the region.

## **HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN PLANNING**

### **Subsidy housing and allocation**

Honourable Speaker, our municipality is playing a co-ordination role within the region regarding delivery of Subsidized Housing. Of note here are the current and future human settlements projects which were initiated as an attempt to reduce backlogs. There are several projects that are at different stages of development.

## **Social housing**

Unfortunately, there wasn't much movement within the Social Housing Sector in the 2021 / 2022 Financial Year. Projects in the area of jurisdiction of the WRDM mostly came to a halt. The reasons for this were mainly the supplementary effects of the COVID-Pandemic, as well as contractual issues in some of the projects that resulted in project delays and project stoppages.

## **Mega projects**

Honourable Speaker, Mega Human Settlements Projects within West Rand Region are intended to deliver the numbers needed in terms of meeting the housing needs required and aggressively transform the spatial patterns in Gauteng. This is a move away from one project delivery approach to a more clustered method – in order to maximise output in the provision of decent houses and impact on the eradication of informal settlements.

Honourable Speaker as the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements rolls out the Mega Cities programme, there is a need for all interested stakeholders to form partnerships to ensure proper planning and provision of all required services such as water, sanitation, electricity, energy, roads and social amenities are properly done. The following are the projects that are in different phases of development within the region:

- Afri-Village, Montrose, Westonaria Borwa, Western Megga, Dan Tlomme and Elijah Barayi.

Mr. Speaker we must acknowledge the fact that housing development is taking place with challenges that must get our immediate attention.

Honourable speaker we can't and should not allow the fact that we create more social issues when allocating houses to our communities.

Honourable Councillors we rejoice when we allocate a house to parents, one can actually feel the pride of the parents and the joy on the kids faces leaves a lump in the throat. But soon afterwards reality kick in and just to attend school becomes a challenge. Imagine yourself, for a moment put yourself in the shoes of the parents, coming from Tambo Section in Bekkersdal and getting a flat in Afri Village and remember you are unemployed. Your daughter used to walk to school in Bekkersdal getting mother tongue education and now you need to arrange transport back to school in Bekkersdal and the Dept of Education can't provide scholar transport as the school in Bekkersdal is now out of the feeder area. Therefore, Speaker we must do proper planning and needs analysis when we build houses and not create a problem on top of solving one.

Speaker at this moment we have children who are simply not attending school due to this challenge, and I urge Ward Cllrs to immediately identify these children in order for us to step up and get all departments involved to get our children in school. We can't have children not attending school due to red-tape and things that we can change, I will not allow this to happen under my watch Mr. Speaker.

Executive Mayors we must step up our game! I urge you to get involved, Ward Cllrs where these challenges are faced must go out and locate our children who are not attending school, I request a report on this matter asap, a formal request will follow.

Don't let our children stay at home due to red-tape, that surely can't be our legacy.

In addition to the above -mentioned Mega Projects, Mogale city is currently proposing the development of Nooitgedacht 534 JQ property as Mega Human Settlement project. This property consists of different portions of land that need to be integrated to form Valley Country Lifestyle Estate. This will be added to the rest of Mega Human Settlements projects.

What is common to all the Mega Projects, Honourable Speaker is insufficient bulk infrastructure supply which will require funding. We will continue to engage the relevant government departments to assist in ensuring that the bulk infrastructure challenges in these projects are addressed with the urgency it deserves.

Speaker housing is a burning issue, and we must focus on transparent housing lists in order to prevent blatant corruption avoid que jumpers.

### **Title deeds delivery**

There has always been an intention to eradicate backlog on the issuing of title deeds, however, we are still sitting with a backlog of title deeds to be issued within West Rand, which include houses from the pre and post 1994 RDP projects. There is need to issue these title deeds from the old stock and wrap up legacy projects.

But Honourable Speaker when it comes to the issuing of Title Deeds this current administration must do much more and we will get it done!

Speaker it is totally unacceptable that for financial year 2021/2022 only 267 title deeds were issued. Merafong leads with 235 followed by Mogale with 30 and Rand West only issued 2 title deeds. We must take immediate action to solve this.

Executive Mayors you must make the issuing of Title Deeds your top priority, we can't and don't have the luxury to think of politically correct excuses not to get this done.

Our people deserve more, and we can no longer fail them, we had enough time to get our house in order.

## **District municipal planning tribunal**

The WRDM, in collaboration with the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency (MISA), and the assistance of the 3 LMs, has finalised the establishment of the West Rand District Municipal Planning Tribunal (WRDMPT) whose responsibilities amongst others is to resolve any development disputes in the jurisdiction of the West Rand. Honourable Speaker we are finalizing the operationalization of the DMPT where we are anticipating to have the first meeting by the April 2022.

## **Bulk Infrastructure to Human Settlements**

Speaker, in line with Bulk Infrastructure to service Human Settlement projects, it is generally expected that the Local Municipalities would provide Bulk Infrastructure. However, the Locals don't have spare capacity to provide these Services neither do they have funds to install the Bulk services as required, due to serious financial constraints.

Honourable Speaker it is our view that another funding model needs to be developed to ensure that there are adequate Bulk Services available to service Human Settlement Developments.

In order to overcome such a challenge, the region may have to consider a holistic approach that needs to be adopted where provision is made for the Development inclusive of Bulk Services.

Mr Speaker, transport and mobility are important success criteria for a developmental state, against this, the National Department of Transport (NDOT), has provided grant funding for the implementation of Road Asset Management Systems (RAMS). The strategic goal of the RAMS Grant is to ensure efficient and effective investment in rural roads through the development of Road Asset Management Systems (RAMS) and the collection of associated road and bridge inventory data, condition assessments, and traffic information. Improved data on roads will guide infrastructure investment, improve accessibility to and mobility of rural communities.

The objective of the grant is to assist District Municipalities to develop in-house skills and human resource capacity and to create employment for unemployed graduates.

At the end of the project, District Municipalities (along with their Local Municipalities) should be able to fulfil their role as a transport planning authority and to utilize the RAMS as a planning tool for prioritizing transport infrastructure expenditure.

Speaker, still on roads and mobility, Gauteng Department of Roads & Transport has indicated that they intend extending the Passenger Bus Subsidy Service to the West Rand. Interactions have commenced with a Project Steering Committee being put in place. A vast amount of groundwork needs to be undertaken before the Service Commencing in the area.

The Taxi Industry has been sensitised on the possibility of a Subsidised Bus Service being established in the West Rand. All necessary processes are being followed and talks are ongoing.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Speaker on the onset I have to state that public safety is the most underfunded and unfunded department of the WRDM.

Honourable Speaker in so far as Public Safety, The West Rand District Municipality is required to promote a safe living environment in accordance with the objects of local government as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Accordingly, the West Rand District Municipality is mandated amongst others to provide Fire Brigade and rescue services in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Structures Act. The Department is divided into three strategic components, i.e. Fire and Rescue Services, Disaster Management and Community Safety Services.

### **Fire and rescue services**

Speaker this component is further sub-divided into three section:

1. Pro-active Fire services/Fire Safety/Fire Risk Management/Fire Prevention & Training
2. Reactive Fire Services/Fire Suppression
3. Rescue Services forming an integral part of fire services

Mr. Speaker during the period under review, the Fire and Rescue services responded to 117 fire related incidents and 96 Rescue and Motor Vehicle Accidents respectively. In spite of the challenges faced by the Emergency Management Services, we still managed to meet and exceed the set attendance time's targets of 80% response within 10 minutes in urban areas (82% fire incidents and 84% rescue incidents) and 20 minutes in rural areas for both fire related incidents and motor vehicle accidents.

## **Simulation exercise**

To stay ready and alert, Honourable Speaker the operational staff members in this unit are required to regularly undertake technical exercises, and thus on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2021, Fire and Rescue Services in conjunction with SASOL SA conducted a multi-agency and multi focused live emergency exercise at Chamdor industrial area at the gas pipelines, the objectives of this specific exercise was to test the logistics, physical capabilities, communications, knowledge and skills necessary to be applied in any eventuality of a flammable liquid incident, the aim was also to ensure that all relevant role players in incidents of this nature are fully prepared.

The exercise was also an excellent training event from the point of view of experiential learning, helping participants to develop confidence in their skills and providing experience of what it would be like to use the plan's procedures in real event.

## **Festive season programme**

Speaker, Public Safety coordinated a festive season programme that commenced on the 3 December 2021 until the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The Festive Season is a period of high number of injuries and people succumbing to injuries caused by accidents on our roads. Mr Speaker the unfortunate part here is that we are struggling with drinking and driving and we must look into getting innovative ways where we can instill discipline in our drivers especially the youth, this thing of drinking and getting on our roads must stop and I will engage with law enforcement agencies to double their efforts and we must drive specific programs dealing with drinking and driving. All drivers and passengers alike must know when you visit our district rather get yourself a sober dedicated driver but don't get on our roads after drinking.

## **Fire risk management**

To ensure compliance with the national building regulations, the fire prevention section conducted 263 building inspections at various premises in the district. The section approved 150 building plans and conducted 129 hazardous material inspections. 35 fire investigations were conducted to determine the causes of fires. We firmly believe that effective fire prevention assist with limiting the number and size of major fires and fire related fatalities and also protect the economic infrastructure against fire damage.

## **Public information and education relations**

Speaker, the Public Information Education and Relations section conducted 63 awareness programs. We managed to address 3054 community members through the awareness campaigns that were conducted. The awareness programs assist with curbing the number of community members perishing in fatal fires during our fire season and to raise awareness regarding COVID.

## **Fire protection associations**

Our Emergency Management Services Mr Speaker is active in the agricultural sector by providing support and coordination to the 11 registered Rural Fire protection Associations in the West Rand. This support assist to minimise the impact of wild land fires during the winter season and consist of coordinating and administration between the different provincial and national bodies responsible for giving effect to the National Veld and Forest Fire Act. The Emergency Management Service have an agreement with Working on Fire and deploy four teams to assist during major veld fires as part of our partnership with other state organs.

## **Emergency services training academy**

The WRDM is one of the few municipalities in the country that established its training academy for emergency services, this academy offers high level training in line with national and international standards, resulting in world accepted levels of competence in emergency management services. Courses on offer vary from basic firefighting and first aid training to more advanced training in Hazardous Materials and various Specialised

Fire & Rescue courses. Also included is the Officer development and Competency training in support of our efforts to improve proficiency levels.

### **Commercial training**

Speaker the academy offers commercial training courses aimed at empowering businesses and individuals who wish to obtain basic competence in the fields of first aid, firefighting and hazardous materials as well as any Fire & Rescue related competencies.

### **Fire and hazardous materials training**

The programs in this course are aimed at emergency service personnel and are open to suitably qualified persons across South Africa

### **Community safety/Social Crime Prevention**

Honourable Speaker during the period under review, the Disaster Management and Community Safety sections worked tirelessly to improve the safety of our communities. The Community Safety Plan speaks directly to matters relating in the enhancement of safety in the region.

The following interventions are included in the Community Safety Plan:

- Improved By-Law Enforcement
- Improved Rural Safety
- Reduction in Gender Based Violence
- Safety in public places
- Improved inter-agency relations
- Community participation

These are all part of daily Community Safety operations however they are not achievable by the WRDM in isolation but requires multi-discipline, multi-sectorial interventions. It requires strong relationship with stakeholders and day-to-day joint efforts.

In order to sustain these interventions, programmes such as the District Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee, Rural Safety Committees, Woman and Children Safety Campaigns, Road Safety Campaigns and Victim Empowerment, programmes are of vital importance and includes stakeholders such as NGO's, SAPS, CPF's, local Municipality Public Safety, Private Security Companies and more.

The Community Safety (together with Fire and Rescue) facilitated multi sectorial and multi-agency operations during the year to ensure safe and resilient communities during law enforcement operations and a multitude of safety operations during the festive season. These operations included Arrive Alive campaigns, which aim to ensure that our communities and visitors travel safely on the roads and consist of roadblocks, safety awareness campaigns and By-Law enforcement drives.

### **Road safety**

Honourable Speaker, the District Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (DLECC) convene on a quarterly basis in order to plan for joint operations. It is through this forum that Road Safety - and Fire Operations and By-Law enforcement operations are arranged. The DLECC can be called at any time when special Joint Operation needs to be planned for specific purposes. The office of Community Safety facilitates all major operations as requested by SAPS, Fire Risk Management, Emergency Services, Disaster Management, Municipal Health Services and Local Public Safety Departments.

### **Communication hub & response services**

Honourable members its worth noting that The Social Media based, District Communication Hub was broadened further in order to assist with both response as well as prevention of elements such as crime, accidents, fires, etc. The Communication Hub again is a multi-stakeholder, early warning platform that also includes response. And it works exceptionally well. It is currently very active in Mogale City and Randfontein.

Out of the Communication Hub a new initiative was born (Collectively with Fire and Rescue, Disaster Management and Community Safety) which are *Response Services*. Mogale Response Services was the first active unit and was followed by Magalies

Response Services, and then Merafong Response Services. Response Services is a unit that involves ALL services, government, NGO and Private Services.

The goal is to give training to everyone on a many different aspects so that when it comes to scenes everyone knows exactly what to do and how to do it. The following unit to be launch is Carletonville which will merge with Fochville. These units are collectively managed by Public Safety.

### **By-law forum**

Honourable Speaker, Two (2) By-Law Forums were also established i.e. Mogale City and Rand West. These By-Law Forums operates on a multi-departmental manner which involves all departments that has enforceable laws such as Health, Electricity, Traffic Department, Town Planning, Building Control, etc. These forums plan and execute By-Law operations and inspections and take action against people who are non-compliance with a host of Laws and By-Laws such as Illegal Occupation, Illegal Buildings, non-compliance to fire safety, health related issues, etc. Merafong By-Law Forum is to follow.

### **Disaster management**

Councilors, The West Rand District Municipality is also mandated in terms of section 43 of the Disaster Management Act, Act 57 of 2002, to provide Disaster Management in its area of jurisdiction,

The Disaster Management section is constantly doing assessments of schools, factories, shops and other institutions in order to assess the safety of structures and evacuation processes in conjunction with all relevant role-players.

Honourable Speaker we are faced with a serious nightmare in Merafong City LM relating to the consistent formation of sinkholes, and this are prevalent in the area of Khutsong in particular. The WRDM and the Gauteng Provincial Disaster Management Centre are focussing on this very big problem. The collective established a Sinkhole Committee wherein all role players including the WRDM Disaster Management Unit, Gauteng Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC), MISA, Dept of Roads and

Transport, GP Health, Social Development, Eskom and all the department of the Merafong Local Municipality are represented.

Honourable Speaker in September 2021 the West Rand Distric Municipal Council resolved to declare Merafong a State of Local Disaster, but this decision was not supported by the Gauteng PDMC. We are currently in progress of classifying the entire area. Residents needs to be moved to saver ground stability areas. This matter Speaker requires serious attention.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **COVID19**

Honourable Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption and hardship in nearly every aspect of our lives, and it continues to weigh heavily on our national, provincial and district economy. We are still in the fourth wave though the epidemic curve is on a downward trend. The pandemic has been affecting the entire food system and has laid bare its fragility. Some confinement measures have been preventing farmers from accessing markets, including for buying inputs and selling their produce, and agricultural workers from harvesting crops, thus disrupting domestic food supply chains and reducing access to healthy, safe and diverse diets. The pandemic has decimated jobs and placed hundreds of livelihoods at risk. As breadwinners lose jobs and fall ill, the food security and nutrition of hundreds of women and men are under threat, with those in low-income households, particularly the most vulnerable, which include small-scale farmers and unemployed people, being hardest hit.

In the COVID-19 crisis food security, public health, and employment and labour issues, in particular workers' health and safety, converge. Adhering to workplace safety and health practices and ensuring access to decent work and the protection of labour rights will be crucial in addressing the human dimension of the crisis.

By December 2021, a total cumulative of 60 881 COVID19 cases were laboratory confirmed in the West Rand. Fifty-six thousand four hundred and eighty-three (56 483) people recovered whilst 1 689 lost their lives.

The West-Rand Health District has been the best performing district with respect to COVID-19 Vaccination rollout in Gauteng since November 2021 to date. The current performance per sub-district is as follows:

- Merafong City: 47% (83 821 out of target population of 176 675)
- Mogale City: 37% (133 073 out of target population of 353 973)
- Rand-West City 41% (97 901 out of target population of 238 739)

Overall the District is at 42.4% (314,795 out of target population of 769,387). The district will continue strengthening outreach campaigns across all local municipalities, through Advocacy, Communication and Social Mobilization activities and persuading community members against the COVID-19 vaccination on the benefits of vaccinating whilst also addressing the myths and fake news.

Honourable Speaker, the Health and Social Development Department, ensures the provision of Municipal Health Services and promotion of a healthy lifestyle among communities including other community sustaining programmes such as Air Quality and Environmental Management. This Department further promotes social cohesion through Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture.

This Honourable Speaker, to ensure safety of food and water, samples were collected, and food premise inspected. A total of 4 027 food premises including Restaurants were inspected to ensure compliance with Environmental Health Standards. Numerous other activities were undertaken relating to restaurants as part of the ministerial COVID 19 compliance monitoring drive. Some of the expired and condemned food stuffs which were deemed unfit for human consumption were removed from the shelves by the Environmental Health Practitioners.

A total of 160 food samples for bacteriological analysis were collected. Four hundred and sixty-eight (468) food safety training sessions were conducted to ensure food safety.

In relation to portable water, a total of 276 samples through collaboration with local municipalities were analysed in accordance with the Water Quality Standards methodology SANS 241. Analyses of water samples have shown bacteriological compliance rate over 86.25% which means that potable water in the West Rand complies with the South African National Standards (SANS) 241. Recently, there were false alert messages on social media about water being contaminated by Typhoid causing bacteria. It was confirmed by relevant authorities that our water is safe to consume. It should be noted that South Africa is Typhoid Fever endemic and with the heavy rains, we might have sporadic Typhoid Fever cases as it is a waterborne disease.

Ensuring that children are safe and healthy at Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDCs), a total of 733 ECDCs were inspected in collaboration with other state organs particularly Social Development Department.

Honourable Speaker, various health awareness campaigns and talks were conducted district wide. The health talks targeted men and women health issues such a cancer and other lifestyle diseases. Campaigns to create awareness on Gender Based Violence were also conducted.

Mr Speaker as father of a girl child I stand before this house today and make a promise that GBV will be treated with the priority it deserves. Chief Whip you know me well and you know that I rarely make promises but on GBV I promise you we will drive specific and targeted programs that will tackle this issue head on. I furthermore promise not to associate myself with anyone who makes him or herself guilty of GBV.

In collaboration with various stakeholders, a total 20 schools were reached with education on teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, Alcohol and substance abuse, Bullying, Human papillomavirus (HPV) and Medical Male Circumcision. Gauteng Department of Health reported that more than 23 000 girls below the age of 18 gave birth between April 2020 and March 2021. There is a need to reach out to more schools to curb the scourge of social-ills amongst young people. The District also coordinated the HIV/AIDS door to door programme which reached out to 173 110 people in 43 247 households.

Speaker, on the downside, the primary healthcare clinics are experiencing a spike of armed burglaries occurring during nighttime from November 2021 to date and 3 facilities have been affected as follows:

- Maki Legwete Clinic (Kagiso),
- Randgate Clinic (Randfontein) and
- Kockssord Clinic (Randfontein)

Equipment valued at R471 676.21 has been stolen. These facilities belong to communities, hence the appeal to communities to protect them.

Regarding Sports and Recreation, various games were funded by the Provincial Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture and had since over years gained momentum. The Games sought to unite people within the district, create access to sport through mass participation, identify and select talented players and promote various sporting codes.

Speaker Sports facilities in our region remain a challenge and most facilities are not maintained and are in a poor or non-existent state. Mr Speaker all of us sitting here know very well the effect sport have on us as a nation and we must do everything possible to get our facilities up and running. I must commend Executive Mayor Tyrone Gray and his team for the effort they put into getting Bob Van Reenen to its current state. Once the community see that you are willing and serious about getting things done they join you and like we say in my mother tongue “Baie Hande maak ligte werk”

Mr Speaker I will personally visit Sport Facilities in the entire region for oversight and a fact finding mission. Executive Mayors we have a Sport Department at the Stadium in Toekomsrus, lets engage them and see where they can assist I will do the same.

A total of 7 schools were supported to establish Arts and Culture groups whilst 6 benefited in coaching clinics. Children at 7 ECDCs were supported with reading books.

Honourable Speaker, effects of Climate Change are a reality. Changes in temperature cause changes in rainfall. This results in more severe and frequent storms. They cause flooding and landslides, destroying homes and communities. Climate Change awareness campaigns were held quarterly to sensitise community members on the effects of Climate Change and how to be environment- friendly.

But Speaker we can't allow the fact that our infrastructure in terms of storm water channels is not cleaned and therefore causing flooding in certain areas. Local Municipalities must do more and ensure that storm water channels are cleaned on a regular basis in order to avoid unnecessary flooding of properties.

On Air quality monitoring is done through the two Air Quality Monitoring Stations located at Mogale City & Rand West City Local Municipalities in order to ensure compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards as obligated by the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act. These stations monitor pollution levels of toxic various pollutants in order to ensure that communities are not exposed to polluted air.

Due to budgetary constraints the South African Weather Services (SAWS) continues to assist the Municipality on the management and maintenance of these stations. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the WRDM and SAWS for 2021/22 has been signed by both parties.

Speaker, On Integrity Management Framework (Ethics, Code of conduct, fraud and corruption), note the following that, Winning the battle against Covid – 19 pandemic and building resilient institutional and societal capacity to deal effectively with any future pandemics and disasters in the West Rand Region. Improving governance across the West Rand Region to focus on delivering results and improving the quality of life of residents as well as enhancing ethics, integrity and accountability. With the covid 19 challenges we draw lessons in strengthening cooperative governance, evidence-based decision making and social compacting as well as good governance. Lessons learned will better prepare us for future pandemics and disasters.

Whilst the municipality is continuing to work with CoGTA, Provincial Treasury and TEI to address issues of fraud and corruption and assist the municipality in building an ethical environment.

Speaker kindly note that Corruption in all its forms will be dealt with in this district, those that are still busy with this practice must know Law enforcement agencies are coming for you and you will have no place to hide, rather go visits SAPS and talk the truth but don't steal from the poor you are not assisting us to build the nation if you steal funds that were meant to benefit our people.

Speaker allow me to remind members of this administration that if you find yourself to be implicated in wrongdoing and corruption of any nature you will be removed. We cant claim to be against corruption and at the same time have implicated members on our administration, that will not be allowed , not under my watch so be warned, and that is a promise Mr Speaker.

With regard to employees in particular, Honourable Councillors, a strategic and professional HR function is critical to ensuring the appropriate skills are in place to support the required internal capabilities. A capable and well capacitated internal environment is key to producing the products and services required to meet the needs of the external environment.

Honourable Councillors, with the Capacity Building Model implemented at the District Level we managed to train 36 employees in the financial year 2020/2021.

Honourable Councillors,

Let me draw your attention to the state of our work environment and facilities. Our employees are not working in a conducive environment, yet they still carry on with their daily tasks. The municipal building is without proper ventilation and maintenance is not properly done due to financial constraints. Our major concern is the roof leak which is also dangerous to members of the public visiting the municipality on a daily basis. We are considering a phase-in approach to fix the building in the 2022/2023 financial year starting with leaks and ventilation.

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

Speaker let me take this opportunity to appreciate and acknowledge as I congratulate

- THE CLASS OF 2021 who made us proud in their performance including the District in the year end results indeed they made the Westrand proud.
- In line with strengthening intergovernmental relations, we have, for the first time concretely concluded an approach where the WRDM is in the Centre for interaction with Mining Houses.
- The effect of this has led to Mining Houses agreeing on using the IDP to inform their SLP's. As a result they have postponed the SLP December submission in order to link it with the IDP. Our discussions are not only about labour recruitment and project hand-outs, but about partnership which will open up the procurement process of mines to our people and leveraging on the assets to unlock economic activities, beyond mining.

## CHALLENGES

Councillors we have many challenges mainly caused by the issue of Powers and Functions and unfunded mandates just to mention a few

- Financial constraints – Municipal cash flow position is at an all times low and municipal projects, programmes and activities are almost grounded to a halt because of this dire financial resource constraints.
- We still struggle to meet our obligations with Creditors let alone salaries.
- Human Resource constraints – staff shortages across front and back-offices service delivery operation and high vacancy rate in key positions.
- Lack or delay in the implementation of powers and functions for the district

### In Summary

Speaker as the current administration we pride ourselves in getting things done and we will get things done in this district as well. We need not be reminded that our communities need better and improved service delivery as a matter of urgency.

While our combined pressure has resulted in an electricity tariff increase that is way off the 20.5% requested by Eskom, an increase of 6.61% is still far too high for South Africans especially the communities of this district who are already crippled under the skyrocketing cost of living.

Mr Speaker

We will fight to create much needed jobs in this district and we urge Local Municipalities to get on board with creating conducive environments for business to expand their operations and for new investors to flock to the region.

We furthermore pledge

Govern in the interest of the people.

Support municipalities in the interest of building sustainable communities.

Involve all stakeholders in order to create much needed jobs

Strengthen governance interventions in public entities and security agencies.

Implement accountability and consequence management.

Be principled with respect and integrity as the cornerstone of our democracy.

Ensure that a municipality builds and strengthens people's power and that residents are actively involved in decisions about their ward, zone, town, or city.

Support municipalities in our Region to make more effective use of information and technology to improve their efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

Strengthen the coordination of Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR) and be more proactive in mediating and resolving problems, including between District and Local Municipalities.

- Build the capacity of municipalities to promote investment and job creation by ensuring that they provide electricity, water and other services reliably and consistently and are efficient in issuing permits and effective in the enforcement of regulations and By-Laws

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Speaker as I conclude, please note ours is not an easy task but with determination and teamwork everything is possible.

Lets take hands and turn things around in this district.

