

## **Mayoral Address – Ordinary Council 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Good morning,

Speaker, Aldermen, Deputy Mayor, Whip of Council, Councillors, Acting Municipal Manager, Directors, Officials, Members of the Public, the Media and to our residents tuned in on our YouTube Channel.

As this is the first council meeting of the year, I would like to start off by wishing every councillor, every viewer, every resident a blessed 2025, may the year ahead be a successful and prosperous one. We have just concluded a tremendously busy and successful festive season and the work done by our departments in keeping our services fully functional should be commended.

My team and I visited some of our beaches over the big days and had the opportunity to witness the work being carried out by our seasonal workers given the influx of visitors and beachgoers. I am extremely happy to report the positive feedback received and to note that our beaches were safe and clean marking an extremely successful period.

Now, I do know that the festive season might not have been a pleasant experience for all our residents. As your Executive Mayor, I have received numerous complaints from our indigent population regarding one of our service providers. For this, I want to start off by apologising to our residents for any inconvenience that they may have experienced. Furthermore, I want to assure you that I have heard you

and that we are actively putting mechanisms in place to improve the assistance that we give to our indigent households. We will reach out to our communities regarding what we have planned in due course.

As a municipality, we are heading into a very exciting time of year where we will be relooking at our budget and budget policies. We are allowed to do this at least once a year, so it is with the knowledge that I have received over the last six months in my tenure as Executive Mayor that I have decided to relook and revisit some of our policies. I have decided that we will relook and revisit our indigent policy as we know that in the previous financial year there were some hiccups experienced by our residents. It is my personal mission to ensure that this policy is tailored to the needs of our residents and that their right to basic services is not harmed or impeded in any way. So, we ask that our residents be patient with us and know that we are currently working on ensuring that our policies meet the needs of all who we govern.

Furthermore, in my last address, I made mention of the fact that the electrification of informal settlements is one of our most pressing issues and that we are actively working towards ensuring that we remedy the situation for our residents living in these informal settlements. I am extremely happy to announce that so far, we have delivered on this sentiment by electrifying homes in the Moeggeploeg informal settlement in Pacaltsdorp. With that, I would like to thank our

Department of Electro-technical services and the work that they do in this space, Specialised Solar Solutions as a service provider and then to Cllr Donovan Gultig, the MMC for Electro-technical services and Cllr Marchell Kleynhans, the ward councillor for overseeing that this life changing project was executed.

Speaker, I would like to give a quick rundown of our departments during the months of December – January. I will be very brief Speaker.

### **Community Services**

I am pleased to announce that the much-anticipated Rosemoor tartan track has reached 85% completion and the anticipated date for entire completion is reported to be the 28<sup>th</sup> of February this year. This is an exciting infrastructure injection into our community. We have also completed the first phase of our illegal dumping strategy which has seen the appointment of 12 coordinators and 310 EPWP workers. By now, our residents should have seen the results of this project across all our respective wards. We are ensuring that George Municipality is clean and remains that way. Then, February month has been identified as the month where cleaning interventions will be taking place across George in conjunction with our Law Enforcement component. I would like to thank our department for their excellent work within the community services spaces, none of this could be achieved without the leadership of Director Dawie Adonis, senior management, and

staff. I would also like to thank Cllrs Adams, Kleynhans and Roelfse for overseeing the operations of this department.

### **Planning and Development**

Since the start of the financial year our planning department has already processed 135 new applications which surpasses the submissions for last year which stood at 109 submissions for the same period. Since the start of the financial year up to the end of December 2024, the building control office has approved a whopping 1498 construction projects to the estimated value of R 1 213 829 570. Over this period 1474 building inspections were concluded compared to 1051 in the previous financial year. We simply cannot deny the fact that George Municipality is growing and the demand for service cannot be achieved or honoured without the commitment and dedication of our officials.

In terms of spatial planning, this unit is making great strides in the implementation of the neighbourhood development and regeneration of Themba lethu through the Iiso lethu precinct. We are currently upgrading Nelson Mandela Boulevard, constructing a new recreation route for which the upgrade of the fence around the sports field and introduction of new gym equipment has already been finalised. In the year ahead, new sidewalks will be constructed to facilitate a run- route with associate lighting and street furniture. This unit has also concluded the land use and environmental authorisation for our social

housing site situated at the former Crocodile Farm site and a development proposal will soon be invited. This project will yield approximately 500 opportunities for affordable rental through the Social Housing grant.

Furthermore, the proposals for the upgrade of St Mark's Square have been finalised and the department will be engaging with the technical departments about the implementation.

Our environmental unit within the spatial planning section has concluded the draft River maintenance Management plans for the Gwaiing, Meulen, and Schaapkop riverine systems.

The demand for housing opportunities keeps growing and during the last quarter the human settlements department registered 352 new applications on the housing waiting list which resulted in a total number of 20501 people overall on our waiting list.

A total of 334 subsidy applications have been approved in the Metro Housing project with the total number of approved top structures standing at 632 opportunities of which 106 have been handed over to approved beneficiaries.

The UISP programme is ongoing with 4350 serviced sites in Thembaletu having received approval from Provincial Government. To date 2124 serviced sites have been handed over to beneficiaries. The department is also ready to embark on construction of 100 top

structures for beneficiaries residing in informal areas. This is phase one of a project that will yield a total of 300 top structures over the next two years.

The property management unit has registered 68 transfers in the past term. A total of 316 title deeds were handed over since the start of the financial year of which 100 of these title deeds were delivered to beneficiaries in December 2024. A further 69 were delivered in January to date.

The municipality has rolled out the FLAME programme to empower entrepreneurs by teaching them how to manage their business finances, develop new business strategies, and expand their business by accessing new markets. Additionally, business owners are taught good financial business habits that can help them achieve financial success. To date, 26 entrepreneurs participated and 18 of them advanced to phase two. Furthermore, the first phase of the Pacaltsdorp Micro Enterprise Facility was completed, and it is envisaged that the second phase will be rolled out in the new financial year.

Thank you to our Acting Director, Delia Power, her senior management and staff for the great work undertaken. Also thank you to Cllrs Jean Safers and Marlene Barnardt for the role that they play within these respective departments.

Our financial services department is hard at work preparing for our budgeting period and as an executive and the mayoral committee we have been meeting with them to ensure that our budgets are aligned and suited for the needs of our residents.

In closing, I would like to thank our staff for their hard work and dedication under the excellent leadership of our Acting Municipal Manager, Mr. Godfrey Louw. To our councillors, the executive and mayoral committee, we have a new year ahead of us, may we use this opportunity for the betterment of our residents.

Thank you.