



The Gateway to Endless Opportunities

**OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY HIS WORSHIP, CLLR
JOSEPH UAPINGENE, MAYOR OF WINDHOEK, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL
MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 2023**

28 September 2023

17H30

Council Chambers

Your Worship, Cllr. Magdalena Lombardt, Deputy Mayor

Cllr. Shafiishuna Nujoma, Chairperson of the Management Committee,

All Local Authority Councillors, present

Reverend Hafeni Mwaningange, NAMPOL Chapel

Mr. Moses Matyayi, Chief Executive Officer

Strategic Executives and Officials, present

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon,

You may recall from my statement last month, the references made to the anticipated staff engagements with the CEO. I am very pleased to report that these engagements are well underway and will continue as part of the CEO's first 100 days in office. Feedback received

thus far is very positive and encouraging so Mr. CEO, I commend you for the consistent effort made thus far to engage employees. The more we understand the organisational culture and values, the more responsive we will be in terms of aligning our organisational capabilities to the expectations of our residents and stakeholders.

Key Highlights from the August Ordinary Council Meeting were as follows:

1. Acceptance of Grant Funding and Donation to the Katutura Old Age Home By the Erich Köhne Trust

Council received funding of N\$11,416,548.84 for the Katutura Old Age Home from the Erich Köhne Trust. The Katutura Old Age Home, which is registered with the Ministry of Health and Social Services as an old age home, received a payment of N\$11,416,548.84 from the

Erich Köhne Trust. The home, which falls under the Department of Economic Development and Community Services, is managed by the Municipal Council of Windhoek, and currently houses twenty-five residents.

The Katutura Old Age Home received its allocated portion from the trust on 29 June 2023, and the funds will be used to cater to the physical well-being of the residents and caretakers in terms of healthcare, dietary needs, upgrading of the facility, security, and safety.

2. Identification, Nomination, and Conservation of 1960 Katutura and Khomasdal Houses as Heritage Assets

The Windhoek Municipal Council approved the identification, nomination, and conservation of seven houses in Katutura and Khomasdal that are over fifty years old to be declared as heritage resources. While the

city centre has monuments and statues, there are no official heritage resources in Katutura or Khomasdal. The aim is to create a cultural precinct by developing a trail around the townships. The houses, located in the following locations and township: Herero, Damara, Wambo, Donkerhoek, Gemengde, and Khomasdal areas will be selected based on the significance of their first occupants and will be transformed to tell the stories of social, political, and educational icons of the 1960s.

3. Establishment of a Memorandum Of Understanding (MoU) between the Municipal Council of Windhoek and the Berlin Energy Agency, Under the Framework of the Windhoek-Berlin Sister Cities Partnership

The Municipal Council of Windhoek approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Berlin

Energy Agency (BEA), a municipal-owned entity of the City of Berlin that offers modern energy solutions and services. The BEA has three business divisions: Consulting, Contracting, and International Know-how Transfer. Through this partnership, the Department of Electricity of the Municipal Council of Windhoek and the BEA are collaborating on a feasibility study to develop a solar Photovoltaic (PV) mini-grid for the Mix Informal Settlement, which is located in the Windhoek Rural Constituency. This initiative aims to provide electricity to the settlement in a more affordable and efficient way, as extending the electrical infrastructure in the area would require significant capital investment. The Berlin Energy Agency (BEA) team, led by its Chief Executive Officer, visited Windhoek in November 2022 for a week-long engagement to discuss areas of co-operation, which are now outlined in the draft MoU.

The month of September was very busy, and I will now focus on some of the main activities:

The Windhoek Residents Mayoral Trust hosted a gala dinner in the early part of September, to reaffirm our collective dedication to the principles of social progression and the Harambee Prosperity Plan. The trust focuses on interventions such as the provision of educational support to tertiary students, hosting of the annual Mayoral Christmas lunch for elders and support towards our most vulnerable residents with basic needs.

I am pleased to announce that the pledges, table bookings and individual seats (minus expenditure), amounted to a total of N\$495,882.87, which will go a long way in assisting our vulnerable residents.

Coinciding with the gala dinner, was the joint signing ceremony with our sister local authorities who also

attended the dinner. The City signed both the renewal of and new co-operation agreements as follows:

Renewal Agreements with:

Gibeon Village Council, Gobabis Municipality, Katima

Mulilo Town Council, Karibib Town Council,

Keetmanshoop Municipality, Lüderitz Town Council,

Maltahohë Village Council, Mariental Municipality,

Nkurenkure Town Council, Oranjemund Town Council,

Rehoboth Town Council and Stampriet Village Council.

New Agreements were signed with:

Okahandja Town Council, Okahao Town Council,

Ruacana Town Council and Tsandi Village Council.

The City of Windhoek also had occasion to visit Berlin in mid-September, where an action plan was signed for the future development of our partnership in the areas of

Smart City, Cultural Heritage, and start-up projects. Berlin and Windhoek share a city partnership and the visit to Berlin was an important visit, to also engage each other in the field of digitalisation and innovation.

The City hosted a Pre-primary and Primary schools Recycling competition under the EU-funded project themed: *“Improving Solid Waste Management in Windhoek”* which is part of the framework of the Windhoek-Bremen sister cities co-operation.

I am happy to also report that on 12 September 2023, the Municipal Council of Windhoek hosted a press conference to address the petition submitted by the Katutura Residents’ Committee. Answers were provided in writing to the said committee prior to the press

conference but, for the purpose of reaching a broader audience, I will now provide the same answers:

1. Introduction of Pre-paid Electricity and Water meters:

The installation of pre-paid water and electricity meters has faced challenges due to financial constraints and limited manpower. It is important to note that the electricity pre-paid installations have always been free for pensioners. However, the only requirement is that the pensioners apply for the installation of pre-paid electricity meters.

As for the pre-paid water meters, there are currently payment options available to pensioners and general residents, which are upfront payments or repayment of the pre-paid meter installation cost, over a maximum period of five years, deducted through the purchase of the unit at an interest rate of 11%.

2. Elimination of consumption estimates

When there is a pipe burst or leakage on the main line,

the City of Windhoek bears the cost of the repairs as well as the losses - not the residents. However, when there is a leak on the resident's property or after the water meter installation, the resident or owner is responsible for fixing the leak and the consumption. Therefore, we encourage residents to use the SMS system for self-meter readings to monitor consumption and detect leaks early.

3. Ending the Contract with Redforce

It must be noted that the City charges 20% per annum on arrears, while Redforce charges 10% on amounts paid. Prior to the appointment of Redforce, clients' accounts were handed over to attorneys for further debt collection. Those accounts handed over for legal collection to external attorneys, accumulated vast amounts of debt, which placed a significant financial burden on the City and the clients, since the attorneys charged legal fees even if they had not collected the amount from the defaulters. Whereas Redforce claims only 10% on actual payment received by Council. The previous collection process proved to be costly, with no surety of financial benefit to the City or the client. Thus,

the appointment of Redforce to collect debts on behalf of the City, was deemed more financially viable.

I also reiterate that **no pensioners' residential properties accounts are handed over to Redforce**, and there is **no interest charged** on accounts handed over to Redforce for all residents, apart from the collection fee of 10% of each payment made.

4. Debt Write-off:

The City is currently working on a proposal to write-off debt for pensioners and interest for all residents. However, this process must be executed cautiously to ensure long-term sustainability.

5. Effective Debt Management:

We are actively considering various debt management modalities and are bound by legal mandates such as the Prescription Act and interest charges as per the Local Authorities Act. Therefore, we cannot freeze interest on arrears, and I urge the public to familiarise themselves with the relevant amendments. However, for pensioners' payment arrangements, a principal

decision was taken by the City to charge only a 15% down-payment, instead of the 33.33% requirement as per the City's Credit Control Policy.

Therefore, I call on all of us to engage the Municipal Council of Windhoek and make the necessary arrangements to install pre-paid electricity and water meters. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Her Worship, Cllr. Magdalena Lombardt, the Deputy Mayor, for her steadfast support during the month of September, in my absence. Thank you, Your Worship.

The City of Windhoek is one of several local authorities around the country (together with our cultural partners), participating in the Namibian Heritage Week for 2023, which kicked-off with a poetry reading event and the launch of the Omutete Wokaholo Exhibition at the Windhoek City Museum last week, which showcased the

history of our migrant labour system. A number of cultural activities were also hosted at the museum this past weekend and the exhibition runs for the next six months and I encourage you all to visit the Windhoek City Museum. In his address at the event, Dr. Job Shipululo Amupanda (Chairperson of the Heritage Committee) emphasised the importance of celebrating our heritage and also proposed the establishment of a Heritage Forum to augment our efforts to unpack the impact of cultural, political, and economic heritage on contemporary society.

Finally, the month of September saw the resumption of the annual public participation meeting cycle which will continue into the month of October. The public meeting forums are an important part of our stakeholder engagement efforts, and we remain committed to improve on our communication and jointly seek

opportunities to find amicable solutions to the challenges we face. I want to encourage all our Councillors to attend these meetings and where necessary make arrangements amongst yourselves to stand in for each other, to ensure that we fulfill our obligations in terms of section 88 of the Local Authority Act.

To conclude, I wish to thank you all for a very productive month and remind us all, as the book of Psalm 133:1 says: *“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity.”* Let us hold each other accountable, help each other and together be proud of what we achieve with dedication and prioritise the interests of our residents.

On a lighter note, please let us gear up for the upcoming Jazz Festival on 7 October. Gates open at 16H00 (until late) at the Vegkop Stadium - Windhoek High School.

We have an exciting line-up of local and international jazz artists and I hope to see everyone there!

That concludes my address for this evening. I thank you.