MINUTES

OF THE PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT TOWN HALL WALVIS BAY ON MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026 AT 18:00

Present: Councilor
Cllr Johannes Shimbilinga
Cllr Miina Hangula
Cllr Ephraim Shozi
Cllr Ndapewa Johannes
Cllr Patricia Munyala
Cllr Pius Benjamin
Cllr Sharon Roodt
Cllr Saara Mutondoka
Cllr Adolf Kahmann
Cllr Jo-Ann Kamaundju

Officials

Mr. Van Wyk
Mrs Sylvia Schubert
Mr. Erikson Mwanyekange
Mr. Theo Potgieter
Ms Krishka Stoffels
Ms Grace Amunyela
Ms. Shirley Tjaveondja

Others
Members of the Public: 52
Members of the Media: 5

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1. OPENING

The meeting commenced with an opening prayer led by Pastor Bennie Smith. Mayor Shimbilinga officially welcomed attendees, introduced the agenda for adoption, and presented the administrative team. A public representative requested the presence of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and it was collectively agreed that the meeting could proceed in the CEO's absence. The Mayor clarified that the Council, inducted on December 4th, was currently in recess and had been in office for approximately two months. The Council committed to providing a direct response to the Association regarding the questions submitted to the Municipality.

2. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mrs Victoria Kapenda
Mr Frans !Gonteb

3. DISCUSSION POINTS

3.1 Solid Waste

Growth and Equipment Needs - Walvis Bay (WB) is experiencing significant growth, particularly in sectors such as oil, gas, and green hydrogen. The Council acknowledges a current limitation in equipment necessary for efficient service delivery.

Procurement Initiatives - Two additional compaction trucks are anticipated for delivery by the end of April 2026. Furthermore, two skip and tipper trucks, along with forty skips, are expected within the next two months.

Tire Recycling and Repurposing - Discussions are underway with companies to facilitate on-site recycling and repurposing of tires, aiming to reduce waste at the landfill. Several Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have also approached the Council with proposals to utilize these tires for various purposes.

3.2 Water & Sewage Management

Infrastructure Challenges - This sector is recognized as demanding due to the high costs and long-term planning associated with infrastructure development. A significant portion of existing problems stems from aging and failing infrastructure.

Sewer System Abuse - The abuse of the sewer system has been identified as a contributing factor to operational issues. The Council plans to launch public campaigns to educate the community on responsible usage.

Sinkhole Remediation - Sinkholes represent a major challenge in Walvis Bay compared to other towns. A contractor has been appointed on a three-year contract to expedite sinkhole repairs.

Fairway Lifting Station - While the Fairway lifting station was completed, the pump station component could not be finalized due to contractor failure. The contract has been terminated, and the Council is in the process of appointing a new contractor.

Water Security - A crucial 10-kilometer pipeline is required to connect Walvis Bay to the regional water network. Namwater is currently engaged in this project, which is expected to be completed within two years. This pipeline will link the town to major Namwater lines and the mine's desalination plant, significantly enhancing continuous water supply.

3.3 Road Management

Contractor Availability - Mr. Theo highlighted difficulties in securing qualified contractors for road projects.

Infrastructure Conflict - A common issue is the presence of sewer lines beneath roads, which complicates sealing and rehabilitation efforts. Many roads require full rehabilitation rather than just re-sealing.

Stormwater Drainage -The town lacks an adequate stormwater drainage system, leading to significant disruption with as little as 40mm of rainfall.

Planned Interventions

Short-term:

A one-year contract for routine pothole repairs, involving three teams, will be awarded. A second bid for re-sealing will be issued following the approval of the new budget.

Medium/Long-term:

Three-year contracts for road rehabilitation have been awarded. (Further details on specific street names to be obtained from Mr. Theo).

3.4 2026/27 Budget input

The Municipality is currently preparing its budget for the upcoming financial year and is actively consulting with the community for input.

The MC Chair noted that the Council is currently operating on a budget established by the previous Council, guided by a strategic plan spanning 2021-2026.

A retreat is scheduled to develop a new strategic plan that will incorporate the NDP6, with a commitment to simplifying the complexity of the previous plan.

3.5 Regulation of Vehicle (cars, taxis & trucs) Activities in Public Spaces

Concerns Raised - Public concerns were voiced regarding taxis parking and washing vehicles in JC Harris Park, questioning traffic enforcement and Council action.

Regulatory Actions - A regulation has been submitted for promulgation to facilitate enforcement against such offenders. In the interim, the Traffic Department will continue to manage the situation.

Designated Car Wash Area - The Council plans to designate a specific area in Mutamane Street for legal car washes, aiming to formalize activities rather than impede business operations.

3.6 Safety and Security

Public Safety Concerns - Issues such as infringement of constitutional rights to safety, harassment of visitors by hawkers near the passenger liner, and public defecation were raised.

Health Impact - A letter from a medical professional cited an increase in patients experiencing health issues linked to tire smoke from the landfill.

Council's Response

- The establishment of a Community Cluster is intended to enhance community policing efforts.
- A bid for CCTV installation has been awarded to improve town-wide surveillance.
- Collaboration with Namport and NAMPOL is underway to track trucks and facilitate the development of an upcoming Truck Port.

3.7 Parks and Fire brigade

Allegations of Misconduct – A concern were raised regarding a fire truck reportedly speeding to Dolphin Park, with occupants not in uniform and without activating emergency lights, claiming to be delivering life-saving equipment.

Council's Response

The recent heatwave resulted in many people at the beach, and some firefighters volunteer as lifeguards. The GM will address the matter of using a fire truck for non-fire-related incidents.

3.8 Bulk Land Servicing

Walvis Bay as Logistic Hub - Walvis Bay's role as a logistics hub was acknowledged.

Housing Development Challenges - Two hundred houses built at Farm 37 lack bulk services, despite N$75 million being allocated by the central government. Concerns were raised about empty houses requiring security, an unbudgeted expense.

Infrastructure Impact - It was noted that commencing bulk services could lead to damage to existing infrastructure.

Broader Strategy - Five towns have been selected by the government for housing development, targeting 1500 plots and houses. Geotechnical surveys are informing contractor requirements, and community outreach is deemed essential before project commencement.

4. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Budgetary Transparency

- A query was raised about the N$1.3 billion budget, specifically regarding the extent of its delivery and current status.

Landfill Management and Illegal Activities

- Public concern about tire burning at the landfill and offers of assistance to the Council were noted. Potential arson charges were mentioned.
- An incident of a municipal vehicle dumping rubble was cited, resulting in one fine.
- Questions were posed about informal recyclers operating at the landfill and the process of transporting salvaged materials, particularly copper.

Response:

Approximately 500 informal recyclers operate at the landfill. The government allocated N$5 million for a boundary wall. Law enforcement views landfill issues as municipal matters in the absence of broken laws. Efforts are ongoing to engage the government regarding site-bound tires, though on-site tire management remains a challenge.

Public Health and Sanitation

- Concerns were raised regarding public defecation in parks and a persistent fly problem.

Response:

Public defecation is attributed to certain behaviors within Walvis Bay, noting high electricity usage in some areas post 5 pm. It was suggested that providing toilets might encourage further negative behaviors (e.g., loitering, informal settlements). The Municipality has had limited success in managing the fly problem, identifying the treatment plant and landfill as breeding areas. The landfill will cease accepting hazardous waste by the end of 2024.

Road and Sewer Lines Coordination

- A point emphasized that the rehabilitation of roads and sewer lines must be undertaken concurrently.

Funding for Contracts

- A question arose about which budget is currently funding awarded contracts and how this process is managed.

Outstanding Debt and Financial Management

- It was highlighted that resident debt amounted to N$480 million five years ago, indicating that credit control policies were not effectively followed. A query was raised regarding the current debt figure.
- The importance of efficient service delivery and managing kerb expenditure was noted.

Port City Development

- The desire for Namport and the Council to collaborate more effectively to transform Walvis Bay into a leading port city and logistics hub was expressed.

Illegal Activities at Landfill

- A question was posed about taking immediate action against illegal activities, particularly smoke, at the landfill while awaiting Ministry approval.

Response: The Mayor affirmed the Council's proactive commitment to addressing the issue.

Environmental and Health Studies

- Questions were asked about air and health studies, with the University of Pretoria reportedly conducting tests. A call for short-term solutions to address the impact of fires, tires, and plastic was made.

Response: The Council acknowledged the complaint but stated it could not provide an immediate, definitive response.

- A suggestion was made for a press release and engagement with the University of Namibia regarding their studies from the current year, prior to public announcement.

Landfill Safety for Public

- Concerns were raised about the safety of individuals delivering items for incineration at the landfill, questioning designated areas and safety guarantees.

Response: Restricting public entry to the landfill was cited as a measure, acknowledging the inability to control tire burning entirely.

- It was stated that the Council has a responsibility to ensure resident safety and can utilize police force for enforcement.

Bylaw Enforcement and Public Participation

- A complaint was lodged about a neighbor washing cars in their yard for over 18 months.
- The Municipality's process for bid documents, including specification drafting and procurement vetting, was briefly explained.
- Residents expressed a desire for greater transparency regarding the Municipality's operational and capital expenditure (OPEX and CAPEX) and a balanced budget.
- Residents offered their skills and expertise for projects, noting that the Act allows for subcommittees and stating that "no one knows this town better than the residents."
- Challenges in implementing bylaws were identified as a struggle for the current Council.
- A question was raised about why the Council is not accepting assistance from residents (e.g., for road repairs).

Landfill Gate Operations

- It was noted that the two landfill gates, previously operating with closing times of 19h00 and opening at 06h00, are no longer being closed.

5. CLOSING

Meeting adjourned at 21h05