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Press statement for Immediate Release

MARRC OUTRAGED AT NON-ATTENDANCE OF SENIOR MUNICIPAL STAFF AT MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (MPAC) MEETINGS

Today we witnessed the complete disrespect and unaccountability of senior municipal staff from the Infrastructure Service Business Unit to attend the MPAC meeting today, 20 March 2025.

Anthony Waldhausen, CEO of MARRC attended the MPAC meeting who are reviewing the Msunduzi municipality 2023/2024 annual report. The MPAC meetings are reviewing the annual report, and the final meeting will be on the 8 April 2025.

The meeting for the Infrastructure Service Business Unit will be rescheduled.

The focus of the meeting was to receive reports from Deputy Municipal Managers from the Water Services, Roads and Transportation and Electricity Supply Services. This was to report on capital projects for 2023/2024.

Mr Sabelo Hlela the Deputy Municipal Manager of Infrastructure Services Business Unit did not attend, and he did not delegate a senior manager to report on behalf of the business unit. An apology was given at the meeting for Mr Hlela non-attendance where he was instructed by the acting municipal manager to attend the Exco meeting as she was not able to attend the Exco meeting.

MPAC members were not impressed and did not accept the apology and will lodge a stern complaint to the acting municipal manager. They will also engage with the chief whip to instruct them that all chairperson of portfolio committees to also attend to MPAC meetings as well.

This is not the first time that the Infrastructure Service Business Unit has not attended MPAC meetings in the past.

Anthony Waldhausen, CEO said "MARRC is totally appalled by the gross misconduct on the part of Mr Sabelo Hlela the Deputy Municipal Manager of Infrastructure Services Business Unit for nonattendance to this all-important meeting. Our observations are that this business unit does not take its responsibilities seriously and undermines MPAC oversight role.

We agree with the MPAC chairperson and members to send a strong message to the acting municipal manager on her gross negligence and to also hold Mr Hlela accountable. We also support their resolution that all chairpersons of portfolio committees must also attend and participate in future MPAC meetings including the current meetings to review the 2023/2024 annual report.

The Infrastructure Services Business Unit is an important unit as we as the public want to know what the status of our infrastructure with regards is to water services, roads and transportation, electricity supply services.

There needs to be tough actions to be taken against the deputy municipal managers who do not attend MPAC meetings and must include disciplinary action too.

The deputy mayor Councillor Mxolisi Mkhize who is the chairperson of the Infrastructure Portfolio Committee also needs to be held accountable and must report to MPAC as well. His committee is overseeing infrastructure in the city, and which is failing and is not doing enough to turn things around on infrastructure. Everyday residents and businesses experience endless water and electricity outages due to the poor and ailing infrastructure. We want to know from the deputy mayor what is he doing about poor and ailing infrastructure? Is he supporting the increase in the infrastructure budget to 8% for 2025/2026 budget which MARRC has been advocating for the past years?

We also call on MPAC to report this matter to KZN COGTA and the Premier's Working Group as well.

We also find that there is no public participation for the public at the MPAC meetings and that needs to change as well. We are only allowed to observe and that is not democracy in action."

MARRC will continue to attend the MPAC meetings and to monitor the accountability of all business units and staff too.

ENDS

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