

The deteriorating state of affairs in Nelson Mandela Bay, a grave concern
By **Mlindi Nhanha** – DA NCOP Member

Honourable Chairperson,

Honorable Members,

The thoughts behind the idea of a Provincial week are excellent and I have no doubts in my mind of the good intentions of those who conceived it. However, it will give us a dose of good to relook at the current model. In my opinion, it is defeating the good intentions and I am happy to make my contribution in an appropriate forum.

On the 25th June 2019, I was privileged to speak in the State of the Nation (SONA) debate. On that day I raised alarm at the deteriorating state of affairs in Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB) and of course the governing party dismissed it as being alarmist because “all was well in NMB” and the DA was just mischievous.

What we found during the Provincial Week, it turned out that “all was not well in NMB” and this was confirmed by two honest and frank presentations by Eastern Cape MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) Hon. Nqatha and a representative from National Treasury.

The presentation by the MEC confirmed what we have always been red-flagging and I would like to commend him for his bravery and forthright diagnosis knowing this could cost his political career.
NMB is broken.

There is an Interim Mayor in place since December 2020, new position that is neither in our Constitution nor the Municipal Structures Act. It’s an invention you can only find NMB and by the way, I have seen correspondence in which Cllr. Buyeye addresses himself as Executive Mayor.

Since the illegal suspension and subsequent golden handshake of R2,1m of the City Manager, NMB holds a South African record of having had no less than 5 Acting City Managers in a space of 12 months. These appointments ranged from a junior staff member, to a tainted and an under-qualified individual who was later arrested for corruption by the Hawks. This is a definite sign of instability.

In 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 the DA-led government spent 100% of the Urban Settlement Development Grant (USDG) funding. In appreciation of a job well done, National Treasury allocated a windfall of R170m and R200m respectively. Sadly, the same can’t be said about the coalition of corruption. My colleagues in NMB are telling me of under-performance of unimaginable proportions. In 2019/2020 the coalition of corruption could only spend 46% of the Capital Budget of R1.6 Billion. This under-spending had a domino effect on the current financial, because the Capital Budget for 2020/2021 has decreased to R1.3 Billion and prospects of surpassing their previous financial year performance are rather dim to put it politely.

After spending R2 billion with not a single bus on the road, in just 18 months in office the DA-led coalition in NMB got the Integrated Public Transport System up and running and profitable. Again sadly, IPTS has collapsed and is one of the reasons National Treasury is withholding all grant disbursements due to non-compliance with National Treasury requirements.

Despite the misleading assertions by the Speaker, that Council and its committees were functional and met regularly. The portfolio committee on Treasury last met on the 25th February 2020.

NMB holds another South African record of longest Council meetings with not a single item being passed.

The Speaker of NMB is a rogue and law unto herself, she has no regard for the Constitution of the Republic or the very rules of order she is supposed to safeguard. She has done everything inhumanely possible to cling to the blue light and bodyguards by preventing opposition parties from tabling legally compliant motions to remove her and the Interim Executive from office.

The Speaker of this cash strapped municipality, through a court order obtained by the DA in August 2020 which directed her to convene a council meeting whose business would inter alia elect a new Executive Mayor. She on frivolous grounds chose to appeal the court order further misusing resources they do not have, needless to mention her appeal was dismissed with costs.

Now the stage is set for the election of the DA Provincial Leader as the new Executive Mayor of NMB and she can expect a legal bill from the office the new Executive Mayor for her account.

Hon. Members, How to steal a city Part 2 is well underway in NMB, that municipality has been broken piece by piece, inch by inch by the coalition of corruption with little purposeful action from the governing party the ANC.

Just recently, a Geneva-based anti-crime NGO reported that known gangsters in the city have teamed up with corrupt politicians to access “clean money”, through tenders. These thugs have gone as far as hijacking tenders, launder money, officials and councillors live in fear for their lives and will go as far murdering those who stood on their way.

Conclusion

Condolences to Cllr. Bobani's family