



## **SUBJECT: UTHUKELA DM's RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE DA**

### **1. Purpose:**

To respond to the questions from the Democratic Alliance (DA) submitted to UThukela DM.

### **Introduction**

The submission intends to provide responses which some of them will be based on empirical evidence and interviews conducted by the Municipal Manager (MM) to the officials who have institutional memory with regards to the subject in question.

Furthermore, the responses are anchored on a close out report which was submitted to CoGTA upon the conclusion of the repairs which were done at the Ezakheni Water Treatment Works.

### **2. Background:**

First and foremost, we as UThukela District Municipality are refuting the claims that the municipality has spent over R45 million on water pumps replacement at Ezakheni Water Treatment Works. The averment was that 45 million was used in water abstraction pump station, such statement is devoid of truth and is too far-fetched and malicious in its nature. The statement is flouted with political sentiments which are aimed at assassination the character of the current administration.

The latter is based on the fact that only R15,5 million which was approved by council and CoGTA was used for replacement and repairs of infrastructure which was damaged by floods. Consequently, a detailed report outlining the work undertaken by the service provider was submitted to CoGTA. However, if the purported expenditure includes the repairs that could have been undertaken prior to the current administration, then the allegations might have substance.

Prior to effecting the last payment of the last tranche, the local inspection was conducted by MISA, UThukela District Municipality and CoGTA teams. If the allegations of R45 million was spent prior to the current administration, then this allegation might be true. The averment to the effect that the politicians and officials in previously ANC and now IFP-run municipality may not be factual. They remain allegations until the forensic investigations commissioned by the current administration is concluded.

### 3. Responses

The information derived from the interviews conducted by the MM depict the following facts;

- The pumps which the DA alleged were installed in 2018 were still under warranty is unfounded and there is no document at the disposal of the municipality that could corroborate the assertion from DA. It is our view that the DA is acting subtle on a proxy. By the same token, APE has not been servicing these pumps as claimed. Arguably, even if the purported warranty had been in place, it could have been forfeited if these pumps have not been serviced.
- The assertion that industrial pumps were installed in 2018 is refuted with the contempt it deserves. A view juxtaposed to the latter could only hold water provided the DA would substantiate it by providing a document signed by both parties which will corroborate claim.
- Uthukela DM never entered into any contract with APE. If they were contracted to Umgeni Water, such a warranty may still be in possession of Umgeni Water. After the floods the pumps were removed by our contracted service provider with the view to assess the extent of the damage. Out of his own diagnosis, it became apparent that repairing them would be expensive and time consuming. Consequently, new pumps were installed.
- It is interesting though that APE had approached the municipality in their own volition requesting that they be appointed to render such services. On or about May/ June, one individual from APE visited the municipality requesting that they be allowed to repair the pumps at a cost. Such a request was dubious and in gross contravention with the Supply Chain Management regulation. Therefore, one is perturbed by the claim that the pumps were still under warranty.
- A video clip taken on 26 March 2022 negates the claim that the pumps were under warranty and managed APE through telemetric. If they purport that they were indeed managing and servicing the plan, one could argue that they are mediocre.
- The municipality further refutes an averment to the effect that such pumps have been written off. According to the information deduced not a single asset received from Umgeni Water has been written off.
- The said pumps have never been stolen nor lost as it is claimed. It would have been much better if the DA has investigated this issue hence such a claim is unfounded.

In light of the disaster that have occurred, Section 36 had to be revoked in the quest to alleviate the plight of the community of UThukela District Municipality. Coming back to your questions;

1. As a starting point, we don't have extraction pumps at our plants but we have what we call abstraction pumps. In terms of specification of Ezakheni WTW abstraction pumps, please find the attached copy of each pump. (See Annexure A attachment).
2. There are seven (7) new pumps that have been bought and installed. For further information regarding the installations whatsoever, you may consult Umgeni Water.
3. Pump A - R2 710 600, Pump B - R1 630 000, Pump C – R1 630 000, Pump D – R2 349 610, Pump E - R1 630 000, Pump F – R1 630 00 and Pump G – R1 421 056. These amounts are inclusive of the VAT.
4. The installation and transportation cost are all included in the costs provided for the pumps.
5. Serial numbers are as follows; 3787, 3753, DHIE80034-11P68, 190705346T, H01180506210300790
6. Certificate of compliance is duly attached. (See Annexure B attachment).
7. The service provider is RASP Consultants cc, appointed not just as an installer but as service provider.
8. The service provider is registered in terms of CIDB Grading of 6 Mechanical Engineering (ME)
9. Registration Number is: 102 105 44
10. Three (3) pumps were refurbished.
11. Pump 4, Aasvoelkop – R6 500, Pump 5 Aasvoelkop – R349 600 and Pump 4, Abattoir Hill – R226 434. All these costs are exclusive of the VAT.
12. Again, the installation and transportation cost are all included in the costs provided for the pumps.
13. Same service provider mentioned before.
14. The service provider is registered in terms of CIDB Grading of 6 Mechanical Engineering (ME)
15. There are 14 abstraction points in the region.
16. Archie Roddel, Bergville, Colenso, Ezakheni, George Cross, Ladysmith, Langkloof, Old Loskop, Moyeni Water, Oliphantskop, Tugela Estate, Weenen 1, Weenen 2 and Winterton Water Treatment Works.
17. It is periodic desilting.
18. Yes, it was operational.
19. There were floods, obviously and our pumps were then flooded and silted. So, during that period of time we were trying to desludge silt and clear our sumps from sand hence we were unable to supply water.
20. All our assets are insured.
21. Yes, claims were submitted however, the situation is similar to other plants and claim for office building. According to the engagement we have with the insurer, it

would appear that we are under covered. Furthermore, the insurances are cumbersome in nature hence if we had to wait for the processes, the community would have no water. This is evinced by the status of the offices which were damaged by floods in January 2022.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Given the above accounts, we are of the view that these claims and accusations are baseless and malicious in nature. Much of the information that is provided is within the context of the new administration that took office in 2022. The heart of the current administration was on fast-tracking service delivery to communities in respect of rapid response to maintenance and repairs. It is suffice to mention one single point of cost-cutting measures – according to Umgeni Water, six (6) pumps were procured from APE at approximately R45m in 2020 with guarantees on the pumps to end in 2021. The pumps with similar or like specifications were installed by the designated service provider for R15,5m post 2022 floods. A saving of R29,5m.

**Disclaimer: Information here above provided is based on interviews conducted with the relevant employees, service provider Kentek and Umgeni Water. Documents attached as annexures.**

**Prepared by**



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**INKOSI NB SHABALALA  
MAYOR  
UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNIICPALITY**