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MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY CLARIFIES ARTICLE PUBLISHED BY CITY PRESS NEWSPAPER DATED 05TH NOVEMBER 2023

The Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti District Municipality has taken note of the City Press newspaper article (05th November 2023) which had intended to put the good name of the municipality into disrepute levelling it with allegations of fraud, corruption and impropriety. As the municipality we would like to put it on record and provide clarity on the false allegations regarding a tender involving a call centre which was approved by the council, we can categorically confirm that a public tender was advertised for prospecting service providers on the 02nd September 2021 and the estimated amount of the tender is R38 million for a period of three (3) years. The bid was advertised for 30 days as prescribed by section 22 of the Municipal Finance Management Act where Wcyber Solutions company was appointed by the then acting Municipal Manager Mr Collen Colane.

The Supply Chain Management tender processes were followed in awarding the tender and the establishment of the structure was implemented in compliance with the mandate of the Provincial Government, Corporative Governance and Traditional Affairs in 2016. The call centre will serve as a Service Delivery Management Centre, Information Dissemination Centre, Disaster Management Centre and an Anti-Corruption & Fraud Hotline.

Further to the above the call centre was established to expand the operation of the reception services of calls at the Fire and Disaster offices; the service provider in question is meant to equip the call centre with modern ICT services with technical radios linked to all fire stations and vehicles to ensure the effective response to all service delivery issues in the District for 24 hours a day. As the municipality's old call centre focuses on fire & disaster, it was inadequate to accommodate ten (10) new operators at a time.



The structure erected was installed by the service provider at a no fee, charged as the allocated offices for the centre was inadequate and was intended to create adequate space. Still on call centre issue, it should be emphasized that the municipality only paid an amount of R 5.7 million up to so far. The budget includes operation, maintenance, human resource, insurance and training breakdown. Though, it has been four months, the call centre service provider not being getting paid, however the call centre remains active. As there are invoices that have not yet been signed to date and the employees who work at the centre have not been reporting to duty due to non-payment of their salaries. Currently, the Municipal Manager is intervening on resolving the payment issues between the municipality and the service provider.

The so-called “whistle-blower” proven himself to be a person who is dishonest and an unreliable character who is not to be trusted as he is making use of his personal vendettas to cause conflict within the municipality with his baseless and unsubstantiated rumours. This character has been interdicted from participating in activities of the council by his political party due to allegations of corruption and fraud levelled against him. It is so disappointing that the author of the article (journalist) relied on the wrong information that was crafted for asset registration to purport that the structure erected was worth 38 million with distorted cost amounts of the equipment installed inside the structure.

Furthermore, the Auditor General has audited the call centre for the 2021/2022 financial year and no discrepancies were raised by the AG. Even this financial year the centre will be subjected to audit. Therefore, it is clear that these false allegations are meant to destroy the good name and smooth operation of the District Municipality.

Even though, the municipality acknowledged that it has its own service delivery challenges, it does not mean that we should overlook other programmes and projects it has committed itself to on Integrated Development Programme (IDP) during the adjustment budget and it should be known that it is within the MFMA regulations to do that.

We therefore plead with social media users, media and publishers to verify information before they disseminate and share it amongst themselves and the public.

Issued by Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti District Municipality Communications

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